

*Federal policy paper
on memorial sites
addressing the legacy
of the Nazi terror
regime and the East
German communist
dictatorship*

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. The federal policy on memorial sites, 25 years on.....	5
Its origins and development.....	5
Nature and tasks of the memorial sites	7
Memorial sites initiated at local level and by civil-society groups.....	8
Criteria for federal support	8
Networks.....	9
3. Current challenges.....	12
Preserving historical sites.....	12
Memorial sites as places of learning and education.....	13
Outreach in an immigrant society	15
Applied research and collaborative research	16
Digitisation and digital lived realities.....	16
Attacks on the free and democratic consensus.....	18
4. Federal funding for addressing the legacy of the National Socialist terror regime	20
Introduction	20
Federal institutional funding for concentration camp memorial sites.....	20
Studying the history of persecution of different groups of victims.....	22
Jewish people.....	23
Sinti and Roma.....	24
Resistance and victims of political persecution	24
Jehovah's Witnesses.....	25
People persecuted as "asocial" or "career criminals"	26
Persecuted homosexuals.....	26

Victims of the Nazi judicial system	26
Civilian forced labour	27
Prisoners of war.....	27
Addressing the legacy of perpetrators and war crimes	28
Further institutions addressing the legacy of National Socialism	29
Federal support from other sources	30
5. Federal funding for addressing the legacy of the communist dictatorship and injustice in the Soviet zone of occupation and the German Democratic Republic	32
Memorial sites and places of remembrance receiving federal institutional and permanent funding	34
Further institutions addressing the legacy of the communist dictatorship in Germany..	36
Federal support from other sources	37
6. Project funding	38
Funding area I: Preserving historical sites	38
Funding area II: Digitisation and digital lived realities	39
Funding area III: Project funding for outreach and applied research	39
“Jugend erinnert”	40
Funding criteria and requirements in funding areas I to III	40
Expert committee for project funding from the BKM	42
7. Potential for development	43
Imprint.....	46

Federal policy paper on memorial sites addressing the legacy of the Nazi terror regime and the East German communist dictatorship

1. Introduction

In the Second World War, Germany caused immeasurable suffering. The end of the war in Europe on 8 May 1945 meant the continent's liberation from Nazi rule. Germany will never forget the millions of victims of this war, of German occupation and of Nazi crimes. The Holocaust – that is, the state-planned genocide of six million Jewish men, women and children with the goal of total extermination – is a singular event in the history of human civilisation. The memory of the Holocaust and the acceptance of responsibility for it are part of the ethical foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany.

We also must not forget the systematic murder of Sinti and Roma and of disabled people; the stigmatisation, disenfranchisement and murder of people persecuted due to their sexual orientation or their political or religious convictions; or the persecution of those who were persecuted as “antisocial” or “criminal”. Additionally, the violent crimes committed by Germany in all occupied territories in Europe have a central place in our culture of remembrance – especially the crimes of the racist war of annihilation in Poland, the Soviet Union and the Balkans, such as policies of forced starvation, murder of prisoners of war and enslavement of forced labourers. All victims of National Socialism deserve our continued remembrance. During the Second World War, a war begun by the National Socialist regime, this regime occupied almost all of Europe and waged a racist war of annihilation in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe. The flight and expulsion of millions of Germans from the former eastern Prussian provinces and from German settlement areas in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe, as well as the division of Germany until 1990, were consequences of the Second World War.

The culture of remembrance of Germany as a whole also includes the communist dictatorship in the Soviet zone of occupation and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Even before the founding of the GDR, the inhumane prison conditions at the special camps of the Soviet zone of occupation led to the deaths of many of the prisoners, who were imprisoned without due process of law. The arrest and conviction of some 40,000 German civilians by Soviet military tribunals between 1945 and the early 1950s served first and foremost to silence all dissent that could stand in the way of establishing a communist dictatorship. The ruling communist party

claimed far-reaching powers in the GDR. To assert these powers, the Ministry for State Security (Stasi) and other security authorities surveilled the population extensively in order to document, punish and suppress all forms of political or social deviance. There was no freedom of expression. Anyone who tried to leave the GDR faced repression; those who attempted to flee across the border could be shot dead or sentenced to years' imprisonment. Confronting the various forms of injustice and repression that people in East Germany suffered until 1989 is a core responsibility of the state. In reckoning with this history, it remains important to do justice to the fundamental differences between the Nazi terror regime and the injustices of the East German communist dictatorship. The crimes of National Socialism must not be relativised or denied, and neither should the injustices of the East German communist dictatorship be trivialised.

The Federal Republic of Germany has the permanent obligation to confront and address the crimes committed or initiated by the state and to commemorate the victims of these crimes. Extant sites where such crimes were committed, planned or administered make particularly suitable locations for remembering these events. According to the division of competences set out in the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) in line with Germany's federal system of government, the federal states have a key role in enabling memorial sites and places of remembrance to fulfil their various responsibilities and tasks appropriately. These sites' main focus is on remembering the victims; reflecting critically on perpetration of and complicity in the crimes in question; communicating about history in a contemporary way in a diverse and digital society; preserving historical buildings and other structures attesting to past events; and advancing historical research on sites, victims and perpetrators.

In Germany, the federal role in culture of remembrance is to provide funding; it facilitates projects, but does not direct them. Any attempt by the state to prescribe a particular perception or interpretation of history is rejected. A research-based approach is the crucial parameter in addressing Germany's past. But in an open and democratic society, the culture of remembrance is not just a federal matter; rather, it concerns all members of the public, including the victims, their descendants and the organisations representing them, as well as state and municipal governments. Just as history and its interpretation are complex and subject to shifts over time, societal discourse continues to evolve. In this context, memorial sites can offer sound, reliable information and provide orientation. Ideally, they should help shape a shared identity and foster societal integration. But in order for such sites to be credible

and convincing, they must be able to work independently of any outside influence or political pressure. This intellectual freedom must be valued and protected.

Yet memorial sites are also the cornerstones of our culture of remembrance – as high-profile institutions and as repositories of knowledge about education, research and public communication. Often their activities are not just local, regional or national, but rather international. They collaborate with museums and research institutions and they have extensive ties to civil society. History is confronted in a particularly visible and palpable way at memorial sites and places of remembrance. These sites address the past on the basis of historical scholarship and seek connections to the many different kinds of sources documenting state crimes.

Because of their significance and their experience, established memorial sites are particularly well-positioned to pursue innovative approaches and thereby to provide inspiration to others who engage in activities related to the culture of remembrance. This gives them unique opportunities to document, present and impart history to broad swathes of society, but it also makes them an increasing target of attacks. For this reason, maintaining and safeguarding established institutions of national significance is also a federal task. Because most memorial sites focus on the Nazi regime or the East German communist dictatorship, the present document is focused on these particular regimes and the specific challenges of addressing them.

The 1999 policy paper on memorials initiated a process of professionalising and interlinking the memorial sites. It also expanded knowledge about the overall context of persecution and about victim groups, perpetrators, complicity and resistance. Additional institutions were founded and initially received project-based federal and state-level funding. Through this process, the federal states' memorial site foundations, which receive federal funding, have developed into important advisory and coordination offices for the smaller memorial sites. They thereby help to reinforce the decentralised and plural nature of memorials in Germany, which are run by both volunteers and paid professionals, with responsibility at local, regional and interregional level. The updated policy paper from 2008 added the memorials at the sites of the Bergen-Belsen, Dachau, Flossenbürg and Neuengamme concentration camps in western Germany to the recipients of proportional institutional federal funding and gave them equal status with the institutions in eastern Germany under the law on support. This change solidified the foundation for internationally recognised work at memorial sites in Germany.

Now the new challenges that have arisen in the past 17 years have made it necessary for us to update this policy paper on memorials once more. The context of the work done at these memorial sites has become more complicated. The number of living witnesses not only to the Nazi era but also to the era of Soviet occupation and the early years of the GDR is steadily dwindling. Powerful first-hand accounts of persecution are giving way to new forms of communication – especially digital communication – which must connect with the public in a dramatically altered communication environment. To preserve and amplify the voices of institutions related to the culture of remembrance, we need to build networks, share experiences and cultivate a spirit of innovation. Collaborations are becoming increasingly important – among the institutions but also with strong stakeholders outside the memorial site landscape.

The individualisation and polarisation of society and the shifts in the international order also affect the struggles surrounding representations of history. Memorial sites play an important role in countering historical revisionism and conspiracy theories with facts, well-founded knowledge and the power of individual and collective memory of violence and injustice. At the same time, the institutions need to tailor their offerings to a broader range of domestic and international target groups: to those both with and without perpetrators or victims in their own family history; to every age group, from the very young to older visitors; to inhabitants of major cities and to the special needs of rural locations. One particular challenge for memorial sites addressing the legacy of the Nazi regime is to deal with every form of antisemitism which deploys the same stereotypes that the Nazi regime used to exclude Jews from society and ultimately to murder millions of them. But other forms of prejudice which the Nazis wielded to persecute millions of people also remain widespread today. These include antigypsyism and other forms of social racism and discrimination such as ableism (discrimination against and stereotyping of people with disabilities). The work of addressing the violent communist dictatorship of East Germany – one of the achievements of the Peaceful Revolution of 1989 – faces the task of communicating the memory of the injustice that people suffered under this regime in order to counter any trivialisation of this injustice. In doing so, however, it is crucial not to relativise the crimes of National Socialism.

Germany's willingness to face the horrors of the Nazi past has contributed to strengthening democracy in Germany and to the Federal Republic of Germany regaining the acceptance of the international community. The memorial sites addressing the crimes of the Nazi regime, like the memorial sites addressing the communist dictatorship, contribute significantly to the

culture of remembrance, to awareness of history, to education about democracy and to respect for fundamental rights in Germany. By keeping alive the memory of injustice and persecution, they make society more resilient in the face of antidemocratic and totalitarian tendencies. The aim of this new policy paper on memorial sites is to support them in this mission and to give them the freedom they need to fulfil their mission.

2. The federal policy on memorial sites, 25 years on

Its origins and development

Even while the Holocaust was still under way, Jews collected material to document the crimes. And in the first few months after their liberation from the National Socialist dictatorship, survivors of the Nazi crimes began compiling information on these crimes and publicly remembering the dead. German institutions and public administrations participated in these efforts with reluctance and usually only under pressure from the occupying forces. These institutions and public administrations referred to the murder of European Jews under the general heading of “war victims”, thereby obscuring their unprecedented, systematic mass extermination. Furthermore, for many years almost all of the groups who had been persecuted were not officially recognised or remembered: Sinti and Roma; people persecuted because of their race, religion, political activity or sexual orientation, such as homosexuals; people persecuted as “asocial” or “career criminals”; deserters from the military; victims of forced sterilisation; Germans of African origin; former forced labourers; and prisoners of war (especially members of the Red Army).

In the Soviet zone of occupation and later the German Democratic Republic (GDR), official remembrance of the Nazi terror regime mainly concentrated on the persecution of communists and their resistance to the regime. The GDR created national memorial sites (*Nationale Mahn- und Gedenkstätten*) in Buchenwald (1958), Ravensbrück (1959) and Sachsenhausen (1961) which established the remembrance of Nazi crimes as part of the official practice of anti-fascism and were instrumental in the GDR’s portrayal of itself as the “better Germany”. This practice treated all victims of persecution in terms of resistance, which hardly did justice to Jews’ specific experience of persecution or their systematic mass murder and which denied the existence of any perpetrators within the GDR’s own borders. In the Federal Republic of Germany, it was primarily the survivors of Nazi crimes and their representatives who began to turn the sites of these crimes into memorial sites – often in the

face of official and public resistance. Efforts to recall the suppressed history, to bring it to the attention of the general public and to counter the denial of the crimes committed during the Nazi regime did not start until the late 1970s. As part of local investigations, civil-society initiatives identified a large number of historical sites and created new memorial sites to remember victims of the Nazi regime. These initiatives rediscovered historical sites and sought out living witnesses and other sources, often against official and public resistance. For a long time, these efforts focused mainly on remembering the victims. In this way, the landscape of memorial sites became more diverse, while the sites began to be connected in an increasingly international network. In Germany, few state or local governments were involved, and there was initially no federal funding for memorial sites.

Following German reunification in 1990, it became apparent that the federal states on their own would not be able to preserve, update and operate the existing memorial sites in eastern Germany devoted to remembering the Nazi crimes or the new sites marking repression by the East German communist regime. That is why the comprehensive approach to federal participation in memorial sites in the Federal Republic of Germany which was adopted in 1993 called for proportional support for these sites, for an initial period of ten years. In addition, a significant number of places of detention and political repression in the GDR were secured and made accessible, again largely by civil-society efforts. These places where people experienced injustice were often stark reminders of repression by the East German regime and were needed to inform and educate the public. Many prisons and former concentration camps were used repeatedly: by the Nazi regime, during the Soviet occupation and/or again by the GDR.

At the recommendation of the German Bundestag's Study Commission on the History and Consequences of the SED Dictatorship in Germany (1992–1994) and its Study Commission on Overcoming the Consequences of the SED Dictatorship in the Process of German Unity (1995–1998), the ten-year limit on institutional funding that the 1999 policy paper on memorial sites had provided for was removed. And the memorials at the sites of concentration camps in western Germany – Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Neuengamme and Flossenbürg – received extensive federal and state project funding which enabled them to update and upgrade their exhibitions and infrastructure in order to better carry out their growing tasks of history and civic education.

Under the 2008 revision of the policy on memorial sites, these sites were added to the proportional institutional federal funding and given equal status with the institutions in

eastern Germany under the law on support. In this way, sites remembering the National Socialist terror regime and the injustice of the communist dictatorship in the Soviet zone of occupation and the GDR gained permanent official recognition for their key role in the culture of remembrance, and they continue to have an important influence on the culture of remembrance in the Federal Republic of Germany today.

Nature and tasks of the memorial sites

In the past two decades, often with the help of continuous federal, state and local funding, many memorial sites have developed into independent places for confronting the past crimes and an independent form of historical museum at the actual sites where persecution occurred. They are cemeteries, monuments, topographical documentation, research institutions, archives, and places for learning about history and politics all at the same time.

In addition to remembrance, memorial sites are also devoted to the tasks of documentation, outreach and education. The staff of memorial sites secure the historical sites, including any existing graves, and conduct research into their history. They examine the role these sites played in the crimes of the regime and collect information on victims, persecutors and the actions of other groups in society at the time. They respond to questions about the fates of victims, maintain contact with living witnesses and their relatives and assist them during visits. In this way, memorial sites serve as a constant reminder of the victims of crimes and create a space for individual and public remembrance. Remembering the victims of persecution, especially at the sites of their suffering, should honour them appropriately and provide information about the historical context.

Memorial sites are also places for learning about history and for promoting a critical awareness of history which can apply the lessons of the past to the present day. Memorial sites make it possible to learn about history from differing perspectives, ranging from the lives and fates of the victims of persecution, to the mentality of a society in which complicity was widespread and resistance was minimal, to the conditions that led some people to become perpetrators. The relevance of the scholarly study of National Socialism and the communist dictatorship of East Germany is especially apparent at historical sites.

The work of memorial sites is based on historical facts and scholarly research. Staff of memorial sites collect objects, documents and books in archives, collections and libraries and analyse them. They use the knowledge acquired in the process for their exhibitions and outreach efforts and make this knowledge available to researchers and the interested public.

Memorial sites work with other places of remembrance, museums, archives and educational institutions and participate in local, regional, national and international networks.

Memorial sites initiated at local level and by civil-society groups

In many places, work at memorial sites, as an important part of the culture of remembrance and of critical awareness of history, continues to be largely carried out by volunteers. Civic engagement and newly discovered information lead to more in-depth investigation of crimes and injustice that had not previously been sufficiently explored, ultimately resulting in the creation of new memorial sites. Such regional memorial sites help people to understand the impacts of the earlier regimes' crimes in their immediate vicinity and to perform the work of remembrance with all segments of society at the historical sites of these crimes. Volunteers have created memorial sites which can be accessed in different ways, which reflect and honour the diversity of the groups persecuted and which ask why people support unjust regimes and how they become perpetrators of injustice themselves. These memorial sites draw attention to the way these former camps and places of detention were embedded in their social environment.

Criteria for federal support

In accordance with the division of competences laid down in the Basic Law, funding for memorial sites is first of all the responsibility of the federal states. The selection of institutions receiving federal funding and the type and amount of federal funding they receive are to be oriented on this condition. The Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) may supplement the support from the host federal state with federal institutional or project-based funding within the limits of the available budget. Apart from a few exceptions in which a memorial site is entirely supported by federal funds, at least 50% of the total amount eligible for funding must come from the budget of the federal state (or in some cases the local government), from the institution's own budget or from external support. As a rule, the relevant federal state must always contribute a share of the funding. This system has proved effective. Institutional funding for memorial sites and places of remembrance is an important part of the national commitment to historical awareness and the culture of remembrance. It provides long-term planning certainty for institutions of national significance. By contrast, project funding supports projects with a limited lifespan. This includes initial funding when the federal state or local government ensures the institution's continued operation. In

accordance with the policy on memorial sites, an expert committee advises the BKM on applications for project funding.

To receive federal funding, institutions which address historical sites of persecution under the Nazi regime or the East German communist dictatorship are judged on the following criteria:

- the national or international significance of the site;
- the existence of structures or topography at the site which stands for the crimes of the Nazi regime, the East German regime or the Soviet zone of occupation;
- how well the site illustrates an aspect of the persecution carried out by the Nazi regime and/or the East German dictatorship;
- the scholarly foundation for the knowledge of history to be conveyed; and
- the cooperation of institutions.

These criteria have proved useful and will continue to be applied.

Networks

Nazis committed crimes in many countries of Europe and North Africa which continue to have an impact today in many parts of the world. In order to do justice to the overarching character of these crimes and their impacts, memorial sites have established regional, national and international networks. They work together to develop joint research projects, and they discuss ethical issues, educational strategies and the use of digital media. The Federal Government supports and funds these networks.

In 1997, a **working group of the concentration camp memorial sites** (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der KZ-Gedenkstätten) was formed in Germany. The working group recommended to the Study Commission of the German Bundestag that federal funding should go to the large concentration camp memorial sites in western Germany too; this recommendation was acted on. The working group connects its member concentration camp memorial museums, publishes position papers and coordinates policy concerns with other memorial sites in Germany.

The **Memorial Museums Department** (Gedenkstättenreferat der Stiftung Topographie des Terrors) has developed into an important institution for cooperation and continuing education. It was founded in 1983 by the Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste) and has been part of the Topography of Terror Foundation since 1993. The Memorial Museums Department informs and advises the more than 300

memorial sites, documentation centres and places of remembrance of Nazi crimes in Germany. It is an active participant in the international network of these memorial sites. The Department organises discussion forums both for institutions and initiatives receiving federal institutional funding and for those that do not. These forums give the institutions a voice and provide important impetus for their work.

The BKM supports the **standing conference of Nazi memorial sites in Berlin and Brandenburg** (Ständige Konferenz der NS-Gedenkorte im Berliner Raum), which was founded in 2009. The standing conference coordinates exhibition projects, organises events and publishes joint policy papers for the institutions it represents. The institutions in this network include the Topography of Terror Documentation Center, the House of the Wannsee Conference Memorial and Educational Site, the German Resistance Memorial Center, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum. The network enables them to coordinate their programmes and take advantage of synergies, for example in the area of continuous professional development. The standing conference advises on federal and state decisions related to policy on remembrance culture. The conference has a different chair each year; a coordinating office ensures continuity.

In 2020, many memorial sites devoted to remembering the crimes of the Nazi regime joined to form the registered association Verband der Gedenkstätten in Deutschland e.V. The association has a range of working groups and task forces which foster cooperation among its members. These include working groups on sites of concentration camps and places where the Nazi ‘euthanasia’ programme was carried out; a task force on memorial sites related to the Nazi judicial system; networks of memorial sites for Nazi forced labour in Germany and for Nazi war prisoner camps; and the association for the remembrance of those the Nazis persecuted as “asocial” or “career criminals” and of all other victims who have not yet been officially recognised (Verband für das Erinnern an die verleugneten Opfer des Nationalsozialismus e.V.). The Federal Republic of Germany believes it is very important to work with government and civil-society institutions and initiatives in the countries affected by the Nazi regime’s organised mass murder or by the German occupation during the Second World War, and those countries which admitted survivors of the Nazi crimes.

The Federal Republic of Germany is a founding member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). In 2000, Germany signed the Stockholm Declaration, pledging to “strengthen our efforts to promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust” and to “commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and to honour those who

stood against it". Germany's expert delegation to IHRA is led by the Special Representative of the Federal Foreign Office for Relations with Jewish Organisations, Issues Relating to Antisemitism, International Sinti and Roma Affairs, and Holocaust Remembrance. The delegation includes researchers from the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ), the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the Topography of Terror Foundation and the Research Centre on Antigypsyism (RCA) at the University of Heidelberg. IHRA plays a key role in creating international standards; producing scholarly reference material for teaching and learning about the Holocaust; and remembering the Holocaust and the Nazi genocide of Sinti and Roma. IHRA also works with transnational networks and initiatives. Germany is participating in the European Commission's efforts to create a Europe-wide network of remembrance of the places where the Holocaust took place.

The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) project is intended to connect and promote transnational Holocaust research, commemoration and education. In Germany, the IfZ, the Arolsen Archives and the Federal Archives are participating in the project. EHRI has been funded by the European Union since 2010.

Fostering connections between institutions and initiatives studying the communist dictatorship of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in the German Democratic Republic is another Federal Government priority. The Stasi Records Archive and the Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Eastern Germany are engaged in this study, along with victims' organisations, research institutions, memorial sites, museums and archives which are dedicated in various ways to research, documentation and education on the communist dictatorship and its consequences in Germany and elsewhere, as well as on resistance to the regime and on the Peaceful Revolution of 1989–90. These efforts also involve a large number of local initiatives which are mostly run by volunteers, many of them eyewitnesses to the history they are studying. The Federal Government therefore supports the reform and renewed activity of the working group on memorial sites related to the dictatorship in the Soviet zone of occupation and the GDR (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Gedenkstätten zur Diktatur in SBZ und DDR).

Founded in 2005, the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS) aims to foster dialogue on the history of 20th century Europe and the discourses of remembrance, with a focus on dictatorships and wars as well as resistance to oppression. The founding members, Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, were joined by Romania in 2014.

The regional, national and international networks encourage exchange, quality assurance and understanding as well as the discussion of ways to respond to increasing extremist attacks.

Intensive engagement with crimes of the state and with society's role in these crimes, including at the sites where they were carried out, is integral to the identity of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is a lasting responsibility of society to study the crimes of the state and the crimes committed with its approval by Germany and its allies in the 20th century and to remember the victims of persecution. Awareness and critical examination of the Holocaust and other crimes during the Nazi dictatorship in particular are essential to our understanding of our democratic system of government. This includes applying the Washington Principles for finding just and fair solutions for the return of Nazi-confiscated cultural property and establishing the Court of Arbitration for Nazi-looted Cultural Property. In view of the suffering caused by Germany in the Second World War, the Federal Republic of Germany's commitment to addressing the legacy of National Socialism continues to play a key role in building mutual trust with our European and international partners.

3. Current challenges

Preserving historical sites

A major challenge for many memorial sites and remembrance initiatives is preserving the historical sites. The physical structures on the premises of memorial sites at places of detention and where National Socialist crimes were committed are particularly at risk. This is also a growing problem for the institutions dedicated to remembering injustice in the Soviet zone of occupation and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The historical sites often extend over large areas of former camps or prisons, with physical structures in various states of repair that may have been put to different uses over the years. Preserving them requires extensive effort and financial investment. The same applies to making their history accessible in line with the demands of heritage conservation. Threats to the structural fabric include unrestored buildings falling into disrepair, climate change, vandalism, wear and tear caused by visitor traffic, and reuse of parts of the site for other purposes, such as commercial warehouses.

Because most of the historical buildings are classified as historical monuments, efforts to preserve, develop and renovate them require specialist and often even scholarly guidance, which is expensive. In order to achieve sustainability goals, it is necessary to plan for successive improvements to the energy efficiency of buildings which were added later for the purpose of

education and administration. And many of the former places of detention also include graves and cemeteries, where victims of persecution were often buried without any respect for the dead or were buried after the war ended.

Preserving, maintaining and managing these historical properties is a task for society as a whole, in which the federal, state and local governments are involved. When the last living witnesses to history have passed away, the historical sites where crimes were committed are themselves important witnesses to that history. They help to preserve traces of the past and keep memory alive. As a member country of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), Germany is committed to the principles of the 2024 IHRA Charter for Safeguarding Sites related to the crimes of the Nazis and their collaborators. An equivalent approach to the sites of government injustice in the GDR is being sought.

Memorial sites as places of learning and education

As time passes, the growing temporal distance to these crimes poses another challenge for the outreach efforts of memorial sites. As living witnesses to history pass away, the culture of remembrance loses important voices. New forms which respect the dignity of the victims must be found and tested in order to safeguard the first-person testimonies of persecution, to make them accessible to the public and to integrate them within strategies for outreach. The passage of time also changes the way history is viewed. Questions like “Why is that important for us today?” and “What does that have to do with me?” increasingly arise. The perspectives of victims’ descendants play a growing role as well. With this in mind, memorial sites are already successfully applying new outreach strategies, not only for eyewitnesses to Nazi crimes, but also for the history of the Soviet zone of occupation and the early years of the GDR.

In addition to studying the history of victims, it is helpful to study the life stories, thinking and actions of perpetrators; the behaviour of the majority population; and the transition from a democracy to a dictatorship in order to understand individual freedom to act and the responsibility of citizens today. Memorial sites also convey knowledge about the ideologies and government structures which allowed dictatorships to be established in Germany. And memorial sites can explain how the larger society failed to acknowledge crimes or recognise the victims. In this way, memorial sites reveal where discrimination and exclusion have continued and where past wrongdoing still needs to be addressed and compensation made to the victims of persecution. This is intended to encourage a learning process for all of society

which helps everyone to realise the value of freedom, democracy, solidarity and the rule of law – and which shows how essential it is for every individual to stand up for these values.

As places of learning and education, memorial sites and history museums have comparable tasks and face similar challenges. The people who visit memorial sites or take advantage of their online offerings are of all ages and have differing levels of education and socio-economic status; they also differ in terms of their gender identity, sexual orientation and physical and mental capacities. Many have an immigrant background. The ways that people perceive and receive information and learn have changed greatly over the past decades. Interactive and cultural education formats, such as work with life stories, historical documents, monuments and digital enhancements, are increasingly being chosen for engaging with historical sites alongside classic forms of outreach, such as guided tours. Memorial sites supplement and deepen the understanding gained in the classroom, but they are no substitute for it.

With educational formats that are inclusive and tailored to specific target groups, that provide deeper understanding and take advantage of new media, memorial sites are meeting the teaching challenges that arise today. Study days and study formats at memorial sites illuminate both the history of antisemitism and aspects of Jewish life. Memorial sites also offer educational formats which respond to the different forms of Islamist and Israel-related antisemitism. More resources are needed for interactive, inclusive and participatory education programmes of research-based learning; for advanced training for pedagogical staff of memorial sites; and for integrating digital formats and materials. In addition to the challenges of rethinking and testing outreach formats, the need to redesign exhibitions in order to respond to habits of perception, to make them accessible for people with disabilities, to take previous knowledge into account and to incorporate new media also creates major personnel and financial challenges for memorial sites. Education and remembrance are increasingly taking place in social media and the digital space as well. Memorial sites need human and technical resources and digital archives to build their own communities and extend their reach, to design campaigns, to publish current content and to moderate their online offerings.

Greater awareness of social diversity has made it clear that memorial sites cannot only convey knowledge or provide historical orientation but must also act as moderators in a dialogue with their visitors, who may confront them with controversial issues and narratives during in-person visits or in social media. Memorial sites invite different groups to participate in projects as part of outreach programmes in order to include their perspectives on history.

Many institutions were established through civic engagement, which continues to be important today. Generational change in society is a challenge here as well. Each successive generation must be convinced of the value of engaging with the crimes of the past in order to develop orientation for the present. All of these tasks and formats require suitable advanced training, space for reflection and highly qualified staff.

Outreach in an immigrant society

The challenges presented by the challenges of ongoing generational change are closely linked to the diversity of society in the Federal Republic of Germany. For many people, the experience of violence under National Socialism or the communist regime in East Germany is not part of their own family narrative. At the same time, however, many of the people living in Germany who have an immigrant background have ties to countries that were affected by National Socialism, whether as occupied countries in Europe or North Africa, or as countries that collaborated with Nazi Germany. Many people with family ties to central, south-eastern or eastern Europe, Israel or the countries of the former Soviet Union are related to victims of Stalinist crimes or the Nazi policies of aggression and extermination. Members of those minorities that were persecuted under the Nazi regime – such as Jews, Sinti and Roma, political opponents of the regime and resistance fighters, people who were taken from their homes and forced into hard labour, or people persecuted as “asocial” – have their own view of history and often suffered multiple kinds of persecution. Marked by decades of silence and shame within their families and by their experience of discrimination in the present day, their perspectives must be heard, moderated and in some cases placed in context. That is what memorial sites can do. Approaches to outreach which enable multiple perspectives lay the groundwork for inviting additional voices and including their access to history in the culture of remembrance.

And people who have themselves experienced violence, war, flight and migration can directly relate to the stories of flight, expulsion and persecution that memorial sites tell. This is where memorial sites can make a valuable contribution to a critical awareness of history by developing new formats for discussing and engaging with history. Advanced training and space for exchange are important in order to be able to utilise the many points of connection in people’s own lived experience for the benefit of society and to foster social cohesion.

Applied research and collaborative research

A central task of memorial sites is researching the history of crimes committed at the historical sites. This also requires addressing overarching topics. That is why collaboration with other memorial sites, archives, higher education institutions, non-university research institutes and other institutions is necessary for a variety of reasons, including in order to establish large-scale databases. Such collaborative research requires memorial sites to have collections which are accessible, ideally in digital form, and which they can then make available to project partners and the public via interfaces. Institutions can also seek knowledge from the public, for example using targeted crowdsourcing. Interdisciplinary collaboration, for example educational research or geoarchaeology, opens new avenues for gaining insights. Research in these areas is fundamental for addressing in greater detail the history of perpetrators, those who profited from the regime's crimes and the related responsibility of society.

Equally important for research and outreach is the preservation and investigation of historical collections, which are mainly based on the artefacts of victims, on archival material, gifts and private collections. Memorial sites themselves have created or acquired extensive source material in the form of interviews with surviving victims and others, such as people who lived nearby.

Preserving, investigating and digitising historical collections and making them accessible to researchers and the public requires sufficient structural, technical and human resources.

Digitisation and digital lived realities

The challenges of digital transformation affect every aspect of the work of memorial sites. Digital transformation offers enormous potential but also places great demands on the staff and equipment resources of memorial sites. Most of them already manage their extensive collections using digital technology. In order for these databases to display search results, further efforts are needed to digitise archival holdings and make them accessible. Digitising objects and written documents also preserves them so that they can be used and studied for many years to come. Collections that can be accessed online make it possible to combine access to the collection with the presentation of selected objects. Institutions take advantage of synergies in the context of existing cooperation on library catalogues and databases. The networking and processing of data are essential for research projects.

At times during the COVID-19 pandemic, education, remembrance and communication completely shifted to the digital space. Memorial sites developed strategies and acquired

equipment to enable digital education formats and streaming of events. The internet made it easier for living witnesses and their relatives living far away to participate by contributing video statements, and online communities that had not previously been addressed were able to be included in contemporary forms of remembrance.

Changes in media use require new forms of presentation. Recordings of eyewitnesses that allow interaction with visitors through artificial intelligence are being tested. They offer new possibilities while raising significant didactic, ethical and subject-related issues. Survivors and their representatives should also be consulted when addressing these issues. Serious Games based on historical facts can stimulate learning. New educational media such as reconstructions of concentration camps which can be used in virtual-reality, augmented-reality or mixed-reality installations require compatible user platforms and custom educational formats. When using innovative technology, the dignity of the victims must always come first.

Memorial sites face the difficult task of deciding how their exhibitions can and must reflect new developments in digital technology. Online exhibitions, storytelling, 'scrollytelling' and other formats can be considered in addition to on-site exhibitions. Memorial sites must communicate in the digital space in order to reach those segments of the public which can only be found there or which can only participate there because of their limited mobility or other impairments. To make their content available to as many people as possible, memorial sites increasingly seek to offer accessible design, for example with text in simple German (*Leichte Sprache*) or sign language.

Memorial sites have already formed networks to mount joint campaigns. If a large number of social media users are to be reached in the long term, strategies must be developed and permanent presence on these channels must be ensured, while more intensive and systematic cooperation with other memorial sites and external partners is needed. The memorial sites must provide moderation for the channels selected. Hate speech, the instrumentalisation of history and false claims must be countered and complaints filed as appropriate. In view of the constantly changing platforms, this requires a great deal of effort.

The media and the public expect memorial sites to provide context and an assessment of remembrance culture-related content on television and radio, in film and in print and social media. Conveying fact-based information in brief social media posts is an additional challenge. Additional training and in some cases new staff positions are needed to be able to prepare

research findings for presentation online, to create professional-quality videos and to manage apps.

The digital transformation is also apparent in the institutions' administration and working methods: they process invoices using digital applications and hold meetings in hybrid formats or online using video services. Questions concerning the long-term preservation of information in digital form when storage media or software become obsolete, storage media lose their capacity to store data, or digital data are threatened by technical failure or cyber attack apply to administrative records as well as collections and archival material. Institutions must set priorities and develop digital strategies for the effective use of resources in every area of their work.

Attacks on the free and democratic consensus

The memorial sites and places of remembrance related to the crimes of the National Socialist regime, above all the Holocaust, and to the injustice of the East German communist dictatorship which receive federal and state funding increasingly find that their work is being questioned or even openly attacked. Attempts are on the rise to re-interpret the history of the Nazi period; to question the legitimacy of memorial sites for the remembrance of Nazi crimes or of any form of remembrance of the victims; and to provoke, intimidate or threaten the survivors of these crimes, their relatives or the staff of memorial sites. False historical narratives and statements that are antisemitic or otherwise show contempt for human dignity are spread especially via social media. In some cases, historical facts are openly denied or put in improper relation to current events, for example following the Hamas terror attack in Israel on 7 October 2023. People who spread lies about National Socialism or deny the Holocaust instrumentalise the memorial sites in their own videos.

The injustice of the communist regime too is disputed or trivialised, and victims are accused even today of being partly to blame. Vandalism and property damage, especially at memorial sites for remembering Nazi crimes, have assumed shocking proportions. Memorial sites' exhibition spaces have been damaged, destroyed, sprayed with graffiti or set on fire; memorial trees have been cut down; concentration camp gates have even been stolen. All of these acts display a new level of disrespect, even contempt for these sites of terror and injustice. Most of the criminals are right-wing extremists, followers of the 'New Right' movement or far-right sympathisers.

Germany's Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*, GG) deliberately begins with the statement "Human dignity shall be inviolable" and defines the protection of human dignity as the responsibility of all government authority. This responsibility entails recognising and honouring the victims of state political persecution and victims of antisemitic, racist and antigypsy government policy and discrimination against people with disabilities or those regarded as biologically inferior because of their lifestyle or criminal history. That is why it is essential to remember the Holocaust and the government crimes and injustice and to defend this remembrance against every form of exploitation, downplaying, denial and revisionism. Parties and organisations which question democracy or which do not rigorously oppose revisionism and antisemitism in their own ranks or even disseminate these views themselves undermine the foundations of our democratic system of law and values. Historical facts must not be subject to revisionism. Claims that have been proven false or are known to be false are not protected by the freedom of expression. They violate the dignity of the victims and threaten to undermine the empirical foundation on which the culture of remembrance is based. Society and the state cannot appeal to neutrality when it comes to downplaying or denying crimes.

The staff of memorial sites must be protected against threats and attacks so that memorial sites can carry out their tasks on behalf of the victims and in the interest of history education, of the critical awareness of history and of a culture of history committed to upholding the values of the Basic Law. The historical sites too need to be protected against vandalism and destruction. Disruptions of educational events at memorial sites by individuals, groups, organisations, political parties and their functionaries must be stopped or prevented entirely. For the same reason, memorial sites must be shielded from political influence, and their independence must be ensured.

Memorial sites must be prepared for such disruptions and attacks. Visitor guidelines and conditions of entry create a legally viable framework for interventions to manage and avert threats. A security plan includes all the precautions and measures taken, such as access restrictions, technical safeguards and security officers; it lists points of contact, such as police and fire services; and helps make staff of memorial sites feel safer. These tasks are new, at least to this degree, and should be properly acknowledged and given government support.

4. Federal funding for addressing the legacy of the National Socialist terror regime

Introduction

A culture of remembrance that is appropriate for today must reflect the latest advances in research on the Nazi regime in order to take the various aspects and actors of the Nazi dictatorship into account, to recall the complex context of persecution, and to include in the societal confrontation with the past the members of the groups persecuted. Connections become apparent when the historical developments prior to National Socialism, such as antisemitism, nationalism, imperialism, and the First World War and its aftermath, are considered. The impacts of the Second World War must be included as well to provide a complete picture: some people had to live in displaced persons camps for longer periods of time; others travelled across Europe to return to their homes; and still others fled or were expelled from their home countries. How these impacts were dealt with and how National Socialism has been addressed in the political sphere, business and industry, the justice system and society since the end of the Second World War should also be critically examined.

Days of remembrance help to keep alive the memory of the crimes committed during the Nazi terror regime. The Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and death camp was liberated on 27 January, 1945, a date that has become an international day of remembrance. In Germany, it is dedicated to the memory of all victims of Nazi persecution. All across the Third Reich, a wave of violent and outrageous acts against Jews and their places of worship, their businesses and institutions began on 9 November 1938. The German attack on Poland that started the Second World War on 1 September 1939 is another day to remember, as is 2 August 1944, when the last Sinti and Roma imprisoned in the Auschwitz concentration camp were murdered. In 2015, the European Parliament designated 2 August as an official day of remembrance for the Nazi genocide of Sinti and Roma. The end of the Second World War and liberation from National Socialism on 8 May 1945 is another day of commemoration.

Federal institutional funding for concentration camp memorial sites

The major memorial sites at the former concentration camps were included in permanent federal funding as provided for by the policy on memorial sites formulated in 1999 and 2008. The Office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) will

continue to provide supplemental funding within the limits of the available budget so that their needs are met.

The **Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum** is dedicated to the memory both of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp under the Nazi regime and of the Soviet special camp on the same site after the Second World War. It serves as an example of the function as model camp which was used to train concentration camp staff; the inspectorate of concentration camps (*Inspektion der Konzentrationslager*) was also located nearby. As a forced labour camp for Berlin, the Reich capital, and as a prison for “special inmates” (*Sonderhäftlinge*), whose roles or relatives made them a subject of particular interest to the regime, Sachsenhausen had a special status among concentration camps. In addition to the Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum, the Brandenburg Memorials Foundation is responsible for the **Death March Memorial in Below Forest**, which commemorates the death march, the crimes during the final phase of the Second World War and the liberation of Sachsenhausen’s inmates. The foundation also maintains the **Memorial and Museum Lieberose in Jamlitz**, where the SS built the largest camp for Jewish prisoners in what today are the federal states of Berlin and Brandenburg. After the Second World War, it was used as a Soviet special camp. The Brandenburg Memorials Foundation is also responsible for the **Ravensbrück Memorial Museum**, located on the site of the largest concentration camp for women on German territory.

The **Buchenwald Memorial** is located on the site of a Nazi concentration camp that was later used as a Soviet special camp. The concentration camp was one of the largest in the German Reich, with more than 140 satellite camps. The **Mittelbau-Dora Memorial** is dedicated to the memory of the prisoners and their forced labour in assembling the missiles the Nazis called *Vergeltungswaffen* (retaliatory weapons) and building underground aircraft factories and fuel plants. The Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation supports the work of both memorials.

The **Dachau concentration camp memorial** (KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau) is located on the site of one of the first camps, which served as a model for all later concentration camps and as a training ground for SS members assigned to work in the concentration camps. It was the only camp that was in continuous operation from 1933 until the end of the Nazi dictatorship in 1945. Political prisoners were a significant group of inmates, as were Jewish prisoners, most of whom were incarcerated in 1944/45 in Dachau satellite camps. The **Flossenbürg concentration camp memorial site** (KZ-Gedenkstätte Flossenbürg) tells the history of

concentration camps that were based on the economic exploitation of their victims. The Stiftung Bayerische Gedenkstätten foundation is responsible for both the Dachau and the Flossenbürg memorial sites.

The **Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial** focuses in particular on how prisoners were intentionally worked to death, for example in building the camp barracks and a brick factory and in digging waterways and clay for bricks, under the harshest possible conditions. The camp served as the central point of collection for the White Buses operation mounted by the Swedish government to rescue Scandinavian prisoners. Prisoners from Neuengamme also made up most of the passengers on the ocean liner *S.S. Cap Arcona*, which was bombed by the British in early May 1945 in the mistaken belief that German troops and SS officers were on board. The ship sank, killing more than 6,000 prisoners. The Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial is supported by the Foundation of Hamburg Memorials and Learning Centres.

The **Bergen-Belsen Memorial** addresses the history of the Wehrmacht prisoner of war camp, the SS concentration camp, the death camp shortly before the end of the Second World War and the displaced persons camp after the war. The Bergen-Belsen concentration camp mostly housed Jewish inmates who were intended to be exchanged for foreign currency, goods or Germans interned in enemy countries. The memorial site is part of the Stiftung niedersächsische Gedenkstätten foundation for memorial sites in Lower Saxony.

Studying the history of persecution of different groups of victims

The permanently funded memorials at the sites of former concentration camps are dedicated to the memory of different groups of victims, such as Jews; Sinti and Roma; victims of political persecution; Jehovah's Witnesses and others persecuted for their religious beliefs; victims of politically motivated criminal justice; foreigners brought to Germany to perform forced labour; prisoners of war; homosexuals and people persecuted as "asocial" or "career criminals"; members of the opposition and resistance to the regime; and victims of reprisals in the occupied countries who were imprisoned in camps and many of whom were murdered. Many of these people were incarcerated in multiple prisons and camps, and many were persecuted for multiple reasons. In addition to the concentration camp memorials, there are memorial sites at prisons and other places where people were persecuted. There are also monuments remembering the different groups of victims which reflect how the critical engagement with this history has evolved since 2008. These sites and monuments also receive proportional federal funding, as do prominent sites recalling the crimes of the Nazi regime.

Jewish people

The critical engagement with the rupture of civilisation that was the Holocaust lies at the heart of Germany's culture of remembrance. Remembering the Holocaust, the millions of Jews killed by poison gas and in mass shootings, is part of Germany's national ethos. The Holocaust, in its singularity, is an urgent call to oppose antisemitism in all its forms. For that reason, in a resolution passed in 2019, the German Bundestag adopted IHRA's working definition of antisemitism. The Federal Cabinet politically endorsed this definition in 2017, with the following addition: "Furthermore, the State of Israel, being perceived as a Jewish collective, may be the target of such attacks."

Millions of Jews were systematically persecuted and murdered by Germans and in the name of Germans throughout the Nazi regime's entire area of influence. The Holocaust was an unprecedented caesura of civilisation. Jews were exploited as slave labour and were starved, tormented and killed in ghettos, concentration camps and death camps. Founded in 1991, the **House of the Wannsee Conference Memorial and Educational Site** serves as a reminder of the meeting held there on 20 January 1942 to discuss the genocide of Jews which had already started and to coordinate its expansion to the rest of Europe. The permanent exhibition is centred on demonstrating the shared responsibility for the genocide based on antisemitic ideology. Seminars tailored to specific occupations, such as the police, military, public administration and nursing, address issues related to those occupations and professional ethics. The memorial site's supporting organisation receives funding from the BKM and the federal state of Berlin.

Given the Holocaust's importance as an admonition and an obligation for Germany, in 1999 the German Bundestag passed a resolution to build a memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe. To do so, it established the **Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe**, a foundation under public law, in 2000. The foundation is entirely supported by federal funds. The Memorial and the Information Centre under the Field of Stelae were dedicated in 2005. The memorial's prominent location in the heart of the German capital and the impressive Field of Stelae designed by Peter Eisenman underscore Germany's commitment to remembering the Holocaust. As the central federal institution for remembering the victims of National Socialism, the Foundation is also responsible for four additional memorials for other groups of victims. The Foundation maintains these memorial sites and their permanent exhibitions, in particular the Information Centre at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. On its own or in cooperation with partners in Germany or abroad, the Foundation organises special

exhibitions, lecture series and seminars and produces accompanying materials as well as interactive online formats.

Sinti and Roma

The Nazis systematically persecuted Sinti and Roma and deprived them of their rights. Hundreds of thousands of them were murdered in a racist genocide. In the decades after the Second World War, Sinti and Roma continued to be stigmatised and viewed as criminal in what they experienced as a “second wave of persecution”. Only after Sinti and Roma mounted a civil rights movement did Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in 1982 officially acknowledge the genocide. The genocide of the Sinti and Roma gives the Federal Republic of Germany a special responsibility to fight antigypsyism and to support the minority’s equal participation in society. In 1992, the Federal Government decided to build a **memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe murdered under the National Socialist regime**. Located across the street from the Reichstag building in Berlin, the memorial was inaugurated in 2012 and is maintained by the **Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe**, which added an open-air exhibition at the site in 2022.

The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg was founded in 1982. Both the Central Council and the **Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma** in Heidelberg, which opened in 1997, receive federal institutional funding; the Documentation and Cultural Centre also receives institutional funding from the federal state of Baden-Württemberg. The funding is provided on the basis of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Documentation and Cultural Centre has a library and an extensive archive as well as a permanent exhibition on the Nazi genocide of Europe’s Sinti and Roma. It also has information on antigypsyism today.

Resistance and victims of political persecution

The first victims of Nazi persecution were mainly Jews and political opponents of the regime. **Political opponents** of the Nazis were imprisoned, tortured and murdered in all of the concentration camps and in many prisons and police cells. As a result, many permanent exhibitions and monuments at memorial sites are dedicated to the memory of this large group of victims.

The BKM and the federal state of Berlin support the **German Resistance Memorial Center** Foundation, which conducts research and shows how individuals and groups resisted the

National Socialist dictatorship from 1933 to 1945 and made use of what freedom of action they had. The Center documents all aspects of resistance to National Socialism.

Funded by the BKM, the **Silent Heroes Memorial Center** (German Resistance Memorial Center Foundation) is dedicated to the memory of those individuals who helped Jews facing persecution in the years from 1933 to 1945 in Germany and in German-occupied Europe. The Memorial Center provides information about the desperate situation of those facing persecution and the threat of deportation to the concentration camps. It also describes the fate of individuals who decided to resist the threat to their lives by going underground. The **Museum Otto Weidt's Workshop for the Blind** is supported by the German Resistance Memorial Center Foundation and also receives BKM funding. It is located on the site where workshop owner Otto Weidt employed mainly blind, visually impaired, and hearing-impaired Jews in making brooms and brushes in order to protect them against persecution and deportation.

Jehovah's Witnesses

In June 2023, the German Bundestag resolved to build a memorial to the **Jehovah's Witnesses persecuted and murdered under the National Socialist regime**. The **Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe** will build and maintain this memorial. The German Bundestag also called on the Federal Government to take action to reduce the existing shortcomings in the critical examination of this history and in its public recognition. Jehovah's Witnesses are one of the groups of victims which continued to face discrimination under the East German communist dictatorship after the Second World War.

Victims of the Nazi 'euthanasia' murders and of forced sterilisation

In November 2011, the German Bundestag resolved to build a memorial to the victims of the Nazi 'euthanasia' murders. The **Memorial and Information Site**, which opened in 2014, is located at Tiergartenstrasse 4, where the systematic murder of patients in sanatoriums and nursing homes in the German Reich was organised by a unit with the code name "T4". The Memorial and Information Site is maintained by the **Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe**.

The BKM and the host federal state together provide institutional funding for **memorials** to the victims of 'euthanasia' murders at the historical sites of the **Pirna-Sonnenstein** sanatorium (Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten foundation) and in **Brandenburg an der Havel** (Brandenburg Memorials Foundation).

In 2025, the German Bundestag explicitly stated for the first time that the victims of the ‘euthanasia’ murders and of forced sterilisation should be officially recognised as victims of the Nazi regime. The German Bundestag also called on the Federal Government to initiate, with the participation of the memorial sites, a nationwide project to secure, conserve and make accessible patient records, administrative records and perpetrators’ documents. The Bundestag also agreed that the memorials should receive long-term support to preserve physical structures at the historical sites and to manage the growing tasks of archiving and advising.

People persecuted as “asocial” or “career criminals”

In 2020, the German Bundestag called on the Federal Government to do more to increase awareness of the group of victims persecuted as “asocial” or “career criminals”. For that purpose, an exhibition was to be curated, concentration camp memorial sites and documentation centres were to receive support to study and provide information about the life stories of these victims, and research projects were to be funded. The **Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe** and the **Flossenbürg concentration camp memorial site** together developed the travelling exhibition “Die Verleugneten” (The Disavowed), which began touring in 2024.

Persecuted homosexuals

In 2003, the German Bundestag resolved to build a **central monument** in Berlin for the **homosexuals persecuted under the National Socialist regime**. The memorial was officially opened to the public in 2008 and is maintained by the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.

Victims of the Nazi judicial system

In 2002, the Federal Government decided to legally rehabilitate troops who had deserted from the Wehrmacht. In 2009, people whom the highest military court, the Reichskriegsgericht, had convicted of “undermining the war effort” (*Wehrkraftzersetzung*) or of “war treason” (*Kriegsverrat*) were fully rehabilitated. Memorial sites related to the Nazi judicial system and places of detention are dedicated to the memory of these victims and all others persecuted and imprisoned on political, racist or social grounds. They also recall those victims who were convicted of other crimes and whose human rights and human dignity were violated by the courts and the penal system. Memorial sites related to the Nazi judicial system and places of

detention draw attention to the specifics of repression used by the courts and penal system under the Nazi regime and later in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), revealing similar patterns of disenfranchisement and of human rights violations.

Funded by the BKM and the federal state of Brandenburg through its Brandenburg Memorials Foundation, the **Brandenburg-Görden Prison Memorial** has more than regional significance because of the political prisoners housed and executed there from 1933 to 1945. Executions began to be carried out at Brandenburg-Görden in 1940 in part because the central execution site in Berlin-Plötzensee could not keep up with the growing number of death sentences. The **Plötzensee Memorial Center** in Berlin is dedicated to the memory of the more than 2,800 victims of the Nazi judicial system. The Memorial Center is part of the German Resistance Memorial Center Foundation

Funded by the BKM and the Free State of Saxony, the **Münchner Platz Dresden Memorial** (Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten foundation) is dedicated to examining politicised criminal justice and its victims during the National Socialist dictatorship (1933–1945), the Soviet occupation and the early years of the GDR (1945–1957).

The **Bautzen Memorial** is also funded by the BKM and the Free State of Saxony (Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten foundation) and documents injustice in both Bautzen prisons during the National Socialist dictatorship, the Soviet occupation and the GDR, with a focus on the years 1945–1989.

Also funded by the BKM and the Free State of Saxony (Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten foundation), the **Memorial Site Torgau** documents the history of Nazi military justice from 1939 to 1945. Additional subjects include the Soviet special camp and Torgau's history as a penal institution and juvenile detention facility in the GDR.

Civilian forced labour

The **Nazi Forced Labour Documentation Centre** in the Schöneeweide district of Berlin, which is funded by the BKM and the federal state of Berlin (Topography of Terror Foundation), is devoted to the study of forced labour by civilians and is located on the historical site of an almost completely preserved forced labour camp in the middle of a residential neighbourhood.

Prisoners of war

The **Nazi Forced Labour Documentation Centre** in Berlin-Schöneeweide also tells the story of the Italian military internees: after Italy withdrew from the Axis in 1943, the German

Wehrmacht captured Italian troops but did not recognise them as prisoners of war. Without regard for international law, they were then forced to work in Germany's armaments industry.

The **Bergen-Belsen Memorial** encompasses not only the concentration camp and displaced persons camp for Jewish and Polish survivors, but also the camp for French, Belgian and Soviet prisoners of war and Italian military internees as well as the two camps for Soviet prisoners of war in Oerbke and Wietzendorf.

Addressing the legacy of perpetrators and war crimes

Funded by the BKM and the federal state of Berlin, the **Topography of Terror** Documentation Centre is the central institution addressing the responsibility for the crimes of the National Socialist regime, the crimes of the SS and the police in Germany and the rest of Europe, and the way German society dealt with these crimes after 1945. The documentation centre is located on the site of the building that between 1933 and 1945 housed the most important authorities of the Nazi terror apparatus: the Gestapo, the Reichsführer-SS and the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*). This was also the site of Gestapo jail cells in the building's basement where many members of the resistance were held for interrogation.

The **Museum Berlin-Karlshorst** is located in the building where the Second World War in Europe officially ended. There, the supreme commanders of Germany's Wehrmacht signed the documents of unconditional surrender on 8 and 9 May 1945 in the presence of representatives of the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom and France. The museum's permanent exhibition documents Germany's criminal conduct of the war in the Soviet Union and the military occupation of Soviet territory, as well as life in the Soviet Union during the Second World War.

In the treaty of 9 November 1990 between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Germany agreed to preserve and maintain the Soviet monuments and war graves in Germany. The **Soviet monuments in Berlin** (in Treptow, Tiergarten and Schönholz) are dedicated to the memory of the Red Army troops who died while liberating Germany from National Socialism. These monuments are an expression of a diverse landscape of remembrance.

The **Allied Museum** in Berlin honours the service of the Western Allies as victors in the Second World War and guarantors of freedom, democracy and international cooperation after 1945. In particular, it documents the role and commitment of the U.S., the UK and France in West Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany under the conditions of the Cold War.

Since 1993, the **New Guardhouse** (Neue Wache) on Unter den Linden boulevard in Berlin has been the Central Memorial of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Victims of War and Tyranny and thus also for the victims of the Second World War.

Further institutions addressing the legacy of National Socialism

The **Federal Archives** collect and preserve federal archival materials and make them accessible, thereby laying the essential groundwork for a culture of remembrance. The Federal Archives include collections of the central civilian and military authorities, the membership lists of the Nazi party NSDAP and other documents on the party's history, as well as personal archival materials such as the collections of the former Berlin Document Center and the former Wehrmacht information office (WASSt). These collections offer a broad range of sources for the study of National Socialism.

The historical museums receiving federal support make a significant contribution to the understanding of German history. As Germany's national historical museum, the **Stiftung Deutsches Historisches Museum** foundation (DHM) in Berlin offers a complete overview of Germany's past. With its four museums in Bonn, Berlin and Leipzig, the **Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland** foundation (HdG) is dedicated to the history of Germany after 1945. These museums offer permanent and special exhibitions, events, publications and online projects to enable more intensive interaction with issues related to the culture of remembrance. The **Jewish Museum Berlin** (JMB) is a place of reflection on and learning about Jewish history and culture. The iconic architecture of the main museum building symbolically reflects memory and remembrance of the Holocaust.

Based in Magdeburg, the **German Lost Art Foundation** (DZK) is the main point of contact for implementing the 1998 Washington Principles and the Common Statement of 1999 (Statement by the Federal Government, the *Länder* and the national associations of local authorities on the tracing and return of Nazi-confiscated art, especially Jewish property). It supports provenance research projects in public and private institutions holding cultural property, in particular Nazi-looted cultural property. The foundation also supports projects investigating the origins of cultural goods and collections from colonial contexts, projects on cultural goods displaced as a result of war, and projects on cultural property expropriated during the Soviet occupation and in the GDR. The foundation receives institutional funding from the BKM.

The **German Exile Archive 1933–1945**, now part of the BKM-funded German National Library (DNB), has since 1948 collected works published in exile by German writers as well as archivally relevant papers and literary estates of individuals. Through exhibitions, publications and a varied programme of events, the German Exile Archive conveys the many aspects of life in exile between 1933 and 1945.

Founded in 1955, the **German Literature Archive** (DLA) in Marbach maintains one of the most important collections of exile literature. The archive's holdings include the papers and estates of German-language authors in exile and their libraries.

Federal support from other sources

In addition to the extensive support provided by the BKM for addressing the legacy of National Socialism, other federal sources support efforts to foster a culture of remembrance.

The Federal Foreign Office provides funding for the **Arolsen Archives**, which maintain the world's most comprehensive collection of source materials on victims and survivors of Nazi persecution. The Federal Foreign Office also represents Germany in the **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance** (IHRA) and is responsible for its funding. Germany's expert delegation to IHRA is led by the Special Representative of the Federal Foreign Office for Relations with Jewish Organisations, Issues Relating to Antisemitism, International Sinti and Roma Affairs, and Holocaust Remembrance.

The **Federal Ministry of Finance** provides extensive financial support for German, European and international educational projects through its funding programmes "Education Agenda NS-Injustice" of the **Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future"** (EVZ) and "Holocaust Education" of the Jewish Claims Conference. These two educational programmes address Nazi injustice from the perspective of its victims and keep alive the memory of this injustice. The Federal Ministry of Finance also supports the creation and expansion of an online platform, "*Wiedergutmachung* for National Socialist Injustice", for records of restitution and compensation as a foundation for future research and remembrance efforts.

The BKM, the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth all contribute to the **federal programme "Jugend erinnert"** (Young people remember). The latter federal ministry provides support for young people to visit memorial sites as extracurricular projects of civic education. Additional funding, including from private foundations, will strengthen the programme in future, so that as many young people as possible can visit a memorial site. Via the EVZ, the Federal Foreign Office supports

the parts of the programme related to other countries, including transnational history projects, online formats for education and remembrance efforts, multilateral youth encounters at historical sites of Nazi persecution and extermination, and expert exchanges. The “Jugend erinnert” programme is also to be made more accessible for children and young people with disabilities.

The Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth supports programmes for educators and for youth encounters focused on memorial sites and remembrance. This support is provided through the bilateral youth services with France, Poland and Greece and through funding for the centre for coordinating German–Israeli youth exchanges. The international meeting places in Oświęcim/Auschwitz and Krzyżowa/Kreisau receive funding as well.

The **Obersalzberg Documentation Center** is located on a site where Adolf Hitler periodically lived and worked. Along with Berlin, it was the most important centre of power of the National Socialist terror regime from 1933 to 1945. The Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space and the Free State of Bavaria fund the Obersalzberg Documentation Center, a department of the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ).

The federally funded **Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation** was established in 2008 based on a resolution of the German Bundestag. The purpose of the Foundation is to keep alive the memory of flight and expulsion in the 20th century in the historical context of the Second World War and the National Socialist policies of expansionism and extermination and their consequences. With this in mind, the Foundation recalls the more than 14 million Germans who were forced to leave the eastern provinces of Prussia and the areas of German settlement in central, south-eastern and eastern Europe as a result of the Second World War, which Germany started, and its aftermath. The Foundation manages the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation in Berlin, which opened in 2021.

The **Federal Agency for Civic Education**, an executive agency of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, makes a significant contribution to extracurricular education for young people and adults in the fields of history and politics. Its offerings include an annual seminar on memorial sites and issues related to the culture of remembrance, the study of the past and the pedagogy of memorial sites.

5. Federal funding for addressing the legacy of the communist dictatorship and injustice in the Soviet zone of occupation and the German Democratic Republic

Still today, more than 35 years after the Peaceful Revolution of 1989 and the reunification of Germany, it remains extremely important to address the legacy of the communist dictatorship and injustice in the Soviet zone of occupation and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Remembrance focuses on the hundreds of thousands of victims of the communist system of repression and surveillance and the many victims at the GDR's borders. Victims include people who were arbitrarily persecuted by the Soviet occupying powers and held in prisons and special camps, and those who suffered under the politicised justice system or individual measures of repression in the GDR between 1949 and 1989. Many victims did not survive the violence of the Soviet occupation or the GDR's communist regime. Some were executed because they resisted the new regime; others died of starvation or disease in the prisons and camps; still others were killed at the border between East and West Germany. Many others were permanently broken in body and spirit by imprisonment or other retaliatory measures.

Scholarly study and teaching of the history of the Soviet zone of occupation and the GDR has intensified since 2008, when the policy on memorial sites was updated. Memorial sites have been established or expanded at sites where persecution took place. The files of the GDR's Ministry for State Security (Stasi) have been moved to the Federal Archives and permanently secured in the Stasi Records Archive. The office of Federal Commissioner for the Victims of the SED Dictatorship was created in 2021 and has been based since then at the German Bundestag. The Federal Commissioner is responsible for representing the concerns of the victims of the GDR's communist regime to the government and the public, for helping to honour the victims, and for advising the German Bundestag on these issues.

The history of repression, resistance and the Peaceful Revolution has increasingly been accompanied by critical reflection on the period of transformation in reunified Germany after 1990. The earlier focus on the history of perpetrators, victims and the Stasi has been replaced by a more nuanced study of life in the communist dictatorship which looks both at how all government institutions and organisations reinforced the regime and at the limited areas of freedom possible within the family or the church, during leisure time or in youth subcultures. As the period of Soviet occupation and the GDR recede further into the past, scholarly knowledge of their history has grown. At the same time, the perception of the past increasingly

differs between different age groups. Young people who did not directly experience life in a dictatorship, but are influenced by the experiences of family members in the formerly divided Germany or elsewhere, ask new questions of a past which continues to be felt in a variety of ways. The number of people who did experience life in the Soviet zone of occupation and the early years of the GDR and who can provide first-hand testimony is shrinking.

The communist dictatorship's control extended into all areas of life. Surveillance, forced membership in a collective and the threat of repression and psychological manipulation often had significant impacts on daily life in the GDR. Today, some people have a romanticised view of life in the GDR, from the economy and the labour market, the supply of goods, housing and leisure to the treatment of foreign contract workers and the Nazi past. And some even believe things were better there than "in the West". However, these aspects too must always be considered in light of the regime's apparatus of state repression. Only an overview of all aspects provides the full context for understanding the experience of dictatorship in the GDR.

Research has recently focused more closely on certain specific issues and groups of affected persons. These include children and young people who resisted the pressure to conform to the collective and the communist regime, and who for those or other reasons – because their parents were political prisoners, for example – were subjected to sometimes cruel disciplinary measures in children's homes and juvenile work camps (*Jugendwerkhöfe*) run by the GDR youth services organisation. Another group of victims was made up of women who suffered repression directly or indirectly as family members and were especially vulnerable to pressure which the state exerted, for example by taking their children away from them. Special scholarly studies have addressed the practices in the GDR of removing children from their families for political reasons, of exchanging political prisoners for Western currency, and of forcing political prisoners to perform hard labour. These practices require further study. Institutions and sponsors of GDR studies are conducting important research into sites, victims and perpetrators related to these and other aspects of the unjust communist regime.

GDR history is relevant for all of Germany, and the study of communist injustice in the GDR is a task for all of society. The results of such research should therefore be conveyed more intensively in western Germany as well. A larger number of memorial sites, places of remembrance, museums and other institutions have been established in eastern Germany, which each address the legacy of the communist dictatorship in Germany in their own way. They have established permanent or project-specific collaborations and together make up an active alliance dedicated to history and remembrance.

The seizure of cultural assets during the period of Soviet occupation and in the GDR is also part of our history, although relatively little research has been conducted on this topic. The Federal Government welcomes the basic research carried out in this area so far and plans to initiate support for provenance research.

Days of remembrance, such as 17 June in memory of the popular uprising in the GDR in 1953, and 9 October, commemorating the huge Monday demonstration in Leipzig in 1989, help to keep alive the memory of communist rule during the Soviet occupation and the GDR and of the courageous people who resisted it. This applies as well to 13 August, which marks the day in 1961 when the Berlin Wall was first erected, and 9 November, when the Wall and the border between East and West Germany were breached in 1989, in the Peaceful Revolution mounted by people in the GDR. Germany's national holiday on 3 October commemorates the day in 1990 when Germany was officially reunited.

Memorial sites and places of remembrance receiving federal institutional and permanent funding

The **Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial** is located in the former central prison where the GDR Ministry for State Security (Stasi) held people after their arrest and before they were tried in court. Before the GDR was founded in 1949, the Soviet occupying forces used it as a special camp and pre-trial detention centre. The site, on Genslerstrasse in Berlin, recalls the various phases of political persecution, repression and imprisonment between 1945 and 1989. The Coordinating Office of Contemporary Witnesses is based at the memorial. In collaboration with the Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Germany and the Berlin Wall Memorial, it provides contemporary witnesses for educational programmes.

The **Berlin Wall Foundation** maintains six historical sites in Berlin devoted to the following topics: the history of the Berlin Wall and the division of Germany, escape and emigration from the GDR, people killed at the Berlin Wall, art on the Wall, and the Checkpoint Charlie border crossing point.

The **Saxon Memorial Foundation** remembers the victims of the National Socialist dictatorship and of the communist dictatorship in the Soviet zone of occupation and the GDR. The Foundation develops and preserves as places for history and civic education those historical sites in the Free State of Saxony where political violence and injustice took place. The historical sites include the memorial at the former GDR women's prison in Stollberg (**Gedenkstätte**

Hoheneck) which recalls the fates and suffering of the political prisoners there and honours the resistance of many women in the GDR.

The town of Mödlareuth on the border between the federal state of Bavaria, in West Germany, and the East German district of Thuringia was divided by a concrete wall, which earned it the nickname “Little Berlin” and made it one of the best-known symbols of a divided Germany. Now the site of the **Deutsch-Deutsches Museum Mödlareuth**, this former place of separation and division is today a representative place for overcoming borders and coming together.

The memorial to the division of Germany at the former Marienborn border crossing (**Gedenkstätte Deutsche Teilung Marienborn**), on the motorway between Berlin and Hanover, is located at one of the westernmost points along the border between communist East Germany and the democratic countries of the West. The Marienborn border crossing point was an integral element of the GDR’s heavily guarded border. The memorial is sponsored by the Stiftung Gedenkstätten Sachsen-Anhalt foundation.

In October 2007, former political prisoners of the GDR founded the association Menschenrechtszentrum Cottbus e. V. (MRZ), which has been the owner of the former prison (1860–2002) on Bautzener Strasse and the sponsor of the **Cottbus Prison Memorial** since 2011. The work of the memorial focuses on dealing with political injustice during the National Socialist reign of terror and the East German communist dictatorship.

The memorial at the former juvenile disciplinary institution in Torgau (**Gedenkstätte Geschlossener Jugendwerkhof Torgau**) recalls the only officially secure facility for young people in the GDR, where those who were considered recalcitrant were to be “resocialised” under prison-like conditions to conform to the system. With its high walls, watchtowers, guard dogs and barred windows, the Torgau institution certainly looked like a prison.

The **“Runde Ecke” Memorial Museum** is located in the former district headquarters of the Stasi on Dittrichring in Leipzig. It provides information about the history, organisation and methods of the Stasi.

The **Leistikowstrasse Potsdam Memorial** is located on the site of the central pre-trial detention centre of the Soviet Military Counterintelligence Service under the Soviet occupation and in the GDR, where many people were imprisoned and tortured, and some were condemned to death. The memorial sees itself as a museum of contemporary history with special educational tasks. It is maintained by the **Brandenburg Memorials Foundation**.

Further institutions addressing the legacy of the communist dictatorship in Germany

The **Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Germany** plays a prominent role. It has a legal mandate to ensure continuing attention to and study of the causes, history and impacts of the communist dictatorship and the division of Germany and Europe. It fulfils this mandate by providing support to a wide range of projects throughout Germany and through its own programmes of events and educational and online offerings.

The **Zeitgeschichtliches Forum Leipzig** is one of the four museums belonging to the Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Foundation (HdG). It presents the history of the division of Germany, of everyday life in the GDR and of the process of German reunification, as well as the challenges facing a reunited Germany in the 21st century.

The **Museum in der Kulturbrauerei** in Berlin also belongs to the HdG. Its permanent exhibition “Everyday Life in the GDR” sheds light on the disparity between the expectations and reality of life in the GDR. The museum’s programme also reflects on the experience of Germany’s transformation since 1989/1990.

Another HdG museum is the **Tränenpalast** (Palace of Tears) next to Berlin’s Friedrichstrasse railway station. The exhibition “Site of German Division” at this historical site shows how the division of Germany and the construction of the Berlin Wall came about. It also explains how the customs and passport checkpoint for people departing from the GDR functioned and outlines the surveillance system in place at the Friedrichstrasse border crossing.

The German Green Belt along the route of the former border between East and West Germany has national significance. It connects a number of memorial sites, nature conservation areas and biotopes, bringing together political history and environmental education. The efforts to have the Green Belt recognised as UNESCO world heritage receive federal support.

Memorials such as the planned **monuments to freedom and unity in Berlin and Leipzig** and days of remembrance are important for conveying history and coupling remembrance with education.

The union of associations of victims of communist tyranny (**Union der Opferverbände Kommunistischer Gewaltherrschaft e. V., UOKG**) is the umbrella organisation for nearly 40 associations and initiatives of people everywhere in Germany who were persecuted under the communist regime. It offers counselling for them. UOKG members include human rights

organisations, associations of former inmates of special camps, the association of ethnic German expellees, federations of former political prisoners in the Soviet system of forced labour camps, former political prisoners of the GDR, people forced to leave the GDR, people whose property was confiscated, people who were persecuted as school pupils, and former inmates of children's homes. The UOKG represents the interests of victims of persecution and their associations vis-à-vis government policy-makers.

Like every kind of scholarly historical research, the study of the communist dictatorship in Germany depends on archival sources. The **Stasi Records Archive**, which was moved to the **Federal Archives** in 2021, plays a special role in this regard. The Stasi records document how the GDR's Ministry for State Security spied on citizens, persecuted them and often subjected them to severe repression. The records are also an important source for research into the history of the GDR and the injustice of its communist government, and they can help to illuminate individual life stories. Because these records were created as files of the secret police of a dictatorship, access to them is governed by the special rules set out in the Stasi Records Act (*Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz*, StUG). In addition to informing the public about the organisation and methods of the Ministry for State Security, the Stasi Records Archive conducts research on the archive's holdings and on the process of making them accessible and publishes its results. The Stasi Records Archive in Berlin is to be expanded into the central archive on the communist dictatorship and will be the main institution on the Campus for Democracy in the Lichtenberg district of Berlin. On the basis of the Stasi Records Act, the Stasi Records Archive has regional links to additional locations in the landscape of memorial sites.

The **archive of the opposition in the GDR** collects, preserves and provides access to materials on opposition and resistance to the communist dictatorship in the GDR. This archive is the result of a merger of three archives of the East German opposition and civil rights movement. Under the aegis of the **Robert Havemann Society**, it has evolved into one of the most important archives for the history of opposition in the GDR.

Federal support from other sources

In addition to the BKM, the Federal Government Commissioner for Eastern Germany and the Federal Ministry of the Interior too have responsibilities related to addressing the legacy of the Soviet zone of occupation and the GDR. The Federal Ministry of the Interior works closely with the federal states in organising the annual celebrations for the Day of German Unity on 3 October and, among other things, supports the concerns of victims, for example, confronting

the legacy of forced adoption. On 22 May 2022, the German Bundestag resolved to build a centre for the future of German unity and European transformation (Zukunftszentrum für Deutsche Einheit und Europäische Transformation) in Halle an der Saale. The centre is intended to be a hub for scholarly and cultural engagement with the many and varied experiences of transformation related to the reunification of Germany and the internal cohesion of our country. The Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space supports research projects dealing with the history of the GDR.

6. Project funding

The Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) provides project funding in order to support individual projects of particular significance that are limited in time and scope, to generate longer-term momentum and to foster the development of particular areas in a targeted way. An important goal of the funding is to enhancing and further develop smaller memorial sites and the culture of remembrance at local level. The Federal Republic of Germany continues to recognise the special significance of the crimes of the Nazi regime by funding projects dedicated to upholding and researching historical facts and making them accessible to the public; passing on history and memory and engaging with it in continually updated ways; and commemorating the victims. The same holds true for the communist dictatorship in the Soviet zone of occupation and later the GDR. Project funding from the BKM goes to memorial sites, to these sites' funding bodies and to other institutions well suited to meeting the funding goals. Through its three funding areas, the BKM sets new priorities to meet the challenges described above and to preserve and further develop the existing culture of remembrance in all its variety, as well as to equip it for the future.

Funding area I: Preserving historical sites

Safeguarding and further developing the memorial sites' land holdings, buildings and graves, as well as preserving them in line with the demands of historic conservation, is a task for the whole of society. Many memorial sites face the challenge of stopping important buildings from falling into disrepair and restoring their physical fabric. That is why the BKM funds projects to preserve, restore and renovate buildings, memorial site premises and gravesites, as well as later buildings used for administrative and educational purposes. Such projects are based on reliable planning in terms of visitor number forecasts and the use of facilities for education. Conservation of architectural heritage and project input from construction experts and

academic specialists should be taken into account, as should planning for long-term sustainable energy usage and building accessibility.

Funding area II: Digitisation and digital lived realities

People's lived realities and the ways they communicate and acquire information have shifted and become much more widely varied. Today, the everyday realities of memorial sites include, for example, websites as information sources and exchange platforms, as well as digital end devices in the hands of memorial site visitors. In recent years, memorial sites have realised many forward-looking projects in the area of new media, but major deficits and potential for development remain. New strategies and methods for the use of continually advancing technologies are being developed. Funding is to go to projects that make historical topics accessible within visitors' digital lived realities and memorial sites' networks (social media, virtual guestbooks, digital storytelling, e-publications and podcasts, multimedia visitor guidance systems, participation through digital media, serious games and gamified learning options). The aim is to strike the right balance between a form appropriate to the subject matter and a sensible, exploratory way of using new media and harnessing their potential. Accessibility requirements should also be taken into account when designing offerings. Experts from different disciplines are to be included in the projects. The projects are also to take into account the perspectives of those persecuted. Funding also goes, for example, to innovative projects from the fields of digital archives and knowledge-building, and of researching and using archival holdings; the results of these projects are made accessible to and useful for other institutions (online databases; artificial intelligence; virtual, augmented or mixed reality; crowdsourcing, etc.).

Network-building among memorial sites and collaborations with relevant stakeholders outside the memorial site landscape are advisable in order to make these projects more visible. Given the large number of people persecuted throughout the Nazi regime's entire area of influence, international projects also receive support.

Funding area III: Project funding for outreach and applied research

The general project funding for memorial sites is being continued and expanded. This targeted funding is intended to make it possible to realise individual projects which open up new fields of activity, address new topics or use new forms of disseminating knowledge. Exhibition projects (including projects to modernise exhibitions) are also eligible for such funding, as is site-specific and applied research which is necessary for such projects.

“Jugend erinnert”

The federal programme “Jugend erinnert” (young people remember) provides two separate funding lines of support for projects to engage young people with the crimes of the Nazi regime and the East German communist dictatorship.

Applications can be submitted to the relevant foundations: for projects on Nazi crimes, the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (Stiftung Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft) allocates funding from the BKM, and for projects on the communist dictatorship in East Germany, the Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Eastern Germany allocates this funding. Memorial sites, documentation centres, places of learning and other institutions in the field of civic and history education are entitled to apply and should be consulted in the project design process.

Funding criteria and requirements in funding areas I to III

Projects receiving federal funding must be of general interest and notable significance for remembrance of the crimes of the Nazi regime or the communist dictatorship in the Soviet zone of occupation and later in the GDR, or must address lesser-known aspects of history, spaces of remembrance or groups of victims. The funding principles detailed in Chapter 2 apply overall to project-based funding just as they apply to institutional funding.

The particularly relevant criteria for receiving funding from the BKM for memorial sites and places of remembrance are:

- the national or international significance of the site;
- how well it exemplifies an aspect of the persecution carried out by the Nazi terror regime or the communist dictatorship of East Germany;
- the presence of structures or terrain at the site which are representative of the crimes of the Nazi regime or the communist dictatorship in the Soviet zone of occupation and later in the GDR;
- the scholarly foundation for the knowledge of history to be conveyed; and
- the long-term usability of project outcomes and collaborations.

The research community’s assessment of the site’s value is the essential factor in determining whether the site meets the criterion of national or international value.

Sites which exemplify an aspect of the persecution carried out by the Nazi regime or the communist dictatorship of East Germany are those which make the apparatus of oppression

visible using specific examples. Projects on the Nazi regime, for example, could address aspects of the politics and policies of persecution and annihilation or the fates of persecuted Jews or other victim groups.

Structures or terrain at the site which are representative of the crimes of the Nazi regime or the communist dictatorship in the Soviet zone of occupation and later in the GDR are considered to be present if the documented historical events at the site are reflected in physical structures or terrain in a way that is visible to visitors or at least has visible traces. When building and/or expanding a memorial site, it is necessary to ensure that the surviving structures are not significantly altered or covered over. Rather, the site should focus on the character of the historical place in its various phases. Expertise in history, historical preservation, museology, and possibly education and museum education is fundamental in this context.

The criterion of demonstrating a scholarly basis for conveying the knowledge of history is considered to have been fulfilled if the content to be conveyed is documented in line with the standards of the discipline of history or other academic disciplines such as archaeology, and if this content is made available to visitors in accordance with the standards of pedagogy and museology. The project proposal is an indicator of the quality of the planned project.

The long-term usability of project outcomes is understood to mean that, after the project is concluded, its outcomes are made available to the public for the long term and in a suitable manner and that other institutions with comparable project intentions can benefit from the experience gained in carrying out the project. Such outcomes could include media projects that remain usable to others online in the long term. Particular emphasis is to be placed on generating synergies. Collaboration among memorial sites can help conserve resources and divide the work of shared tasks.

Projects should be time-limited and specific and should lead to a clearly recognisable outcome. They can also serve to create new memorial sites if further state, local or private third-party funding is foreseeable.

The BKM can support projects at memorial sites if state and local funding and the institution's own resources have been verifiably exhausted and no other federal ministry is responsible for the site in question (e.g. research funding from the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space). Foundational historical research, international youth meeting centres and basic technical equipment for memorial sites are not funded by the BKM.

It is a necessary condition for funding in all cases for the applying memorial site to present a well-grounded and comprehensible project concept that relates to the historical site in question, meets the standards of the relevant academic discipline and can serve as a basis for evaluation by the expert committee. The concept must contain a reliable cost projection and financing plan. Projects as a whole must be conceptualised and carried out in a way that conserves resources as much as possible. The appropriate criteria for resource conservation in the specific case are to be stated in the application.

The funding application must be submitted via the federal state in which the project is to be located. The state-level authority responsible for culture of remembrance forwards the application and its binding commitment to provide a share of the funding to the BKM. It also includes information about any private funding commitments. In general, federal funding covers up to 50 per cent of the total project budget. Projects can be carried out by multiple memorial sites working in collaboration. It is also possible to submit an application for multiple project areas. For collaborative projects spanning multiple federal states, a host federal state must be designated. For international collaborations, the applicant must be a legal entity located in Germany.

Expert committee for project funding from the BKM

An independent interdisciplinary committee of experts advises the BKM by giving recommendations on applications for project funding. The committee includes one person from each of the following institutions:

- the association of concentration camp memorial sites of the Federal Republic of Germany (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der KZ-Gedenkstätten)
- the association of memorial sites related to the communist dictatorship in the Soviet zone of occupation and later in the GDR (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Gedenkstätten zur Diktatur in SBZ und DDR)
- the Memorial Museums Department of the Topography of Terror Foundation (Gedenkstättenreferat der Stiftung Topographie des Terrors)
- Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Eastern Germany (Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur)
- Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (Stiftung Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft)
- Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung)

- Federal states (right of designation)
- the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (Institut für Zeitgeschichte)
- the Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam (Leibniz-Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam)
- German Historical Museum Foundation (Stiftung Deutsches Historisches Museum)
- Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Foundation
- Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies e. V. (HAIT) at the TU Dresden
- VGDF, an association of memorial sites (Verband der Gedenkstätten in Deutschland e.V. / FORUM (VGDF))
- Each of the two “Arbeitsgemeinschaften” listed above also names an additional person. These two people should have expertise in history and media education, cultural education or digital teaching of history.

The committee members are appointed for a period of four years. Reappointment is permissible. The BKM makes the final decision on project funding.

7. Potential for development

The German Bundestag has approved additional projects in the field of remembrance policy. The **documentation centre on the German occupation of Europe in the Second World War** under the aegis of the **German Historical Museum Foundation**, which is to be created in Berlin, will examine and convey the history of German occupation and of the area of German influence during the Second World War in a comparative European perspective. The new museum will centre on the experiences and suffering of different groups of victims, convey the European dimensions of the Holocaust and pose questions about perpetrators and responsibility.

A place of remembrance and encounter with Poland is also to be created in Berlin. The **German–Polish House** under lead responsibility of the **Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe** is another important memory policy project of the Federal Republic of Germany, which provides important impetus for a deeper understanding of German–Polish relations. Remembering the victims of the German occupation of Poland in the Second World War is a top priority. A dialogue platform for collaboration between German and Polish memorial sites addressing the Nazi regime is currently under development.

The **Memorial Museums Department** of the **Topography of Terror Foundation** supports networking and sharing of knowledge and experience on Nazi crimes, and also funds international collaboration. Through a variety of formats, it also contributes to nationwide sharing among memorial sites in the context of decentralised memorial site work, boosting their visibility. The division concerned with memorial sites needs to be put in a position to develop these fields of activity further. In coordination with existing networks at federal and state level, a long-term infrastructure of collaboration among memorial sites and a decentralised network of expertise are to be created, which will also provide access to qualification and further training measures for a memorial site landscape that operates within a federal system and partially with volunteer workers.

The planned **memorial to the victims of the communist dictatorship in Germany**, which will be situated in the heart of Berlin, will close a gap in public remembrance of these victims of state violence.

A new forum on opposition and resistance in East Germany (**Forum Opposition und Widerstand 1945–1990 (FOW)**) is to be realised on the basis of a feasibility study carried out by the Robert Havemann Society on behalf of the German Bundestag and is to be included in the federal policy on memorial sites. The questions of how to fund and organise the FOW and where to locate it are being examined at federal level.

The BKM will appoint a **scholarly commission** to issue recommendations on which institutions devoted to addressing the Nazi terror regime and the communist dictatorship of East Germany are to receive institutional federal funding. To this end, the commission will examine the work of existing memorial sites in order to identify issues relating to persecuted groups, the overall context of crimes, the history of addressing these crimes or the forms of culture of remembrance which may not yet have been sufficiently addressed. All measures are subject to funding limits based on the federal budget.

Remembrance, research, addressing the past and communicating about it are lasting responsibilities. New findings, new questions, and new technologies and methods, as well as changes in our society, make it necessary to continually review the actual state of knowledge, our own work and its impacts, and to re-orient our work to new challenges. This is the permanent task of memorial sites that receive federal support and funding.

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