

**State Secretary Hans Winkler reveals commemorative plaque for the Austrian victims of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp: "Never again"**



Berlin, 23 June 2008 - "Never again" was the slogan at the establishment of the United Nations. It has no less meaning today than then. Today, we are still not immune to inhuman crimes such as those committed here in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. What we need is a genuine culture of remembrance. A reminder of what humans can inflict on humans. We must learn from the past for our present and our future. Therefore, crimes such as those committed here must not fall into oblivion. We owe this to the victims and the survivors. I also consider it our obligation to do everything possible to ensure that the countless victims are individualized and that their human identity is returned to them", said State Secretary Hans Winkler on the occasion of the unveiling of a commemorative plaque dedicated to the Austrians who were persecuted, abused, and murdered in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. The commemorative plaque is located at the historical wall of the camp, near the former hospital barracks.

More than 650 persecuted persons from Austria known by name were imprisoned in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp between 1938 and 1945. Only recently, research work carried out at the University of Vienna made it possible to describe

the Austrian prisoners as a separate group of victims, considered citizens of the German Reich after Austria's annexation ("Anschluss") in March 1938.

The Anschluss of Austria by the German Reich was carried out 70 years ago. The year 1938 saw the loss of Austria's state sovereignty, and also the beginning of a first wave of arrests and deportations to National Socialist concentration camps. "Austria was a victim. Many Austrians, however, were also perpetrators during the National Socialist reign of violence. There is no collective guilt, but a collective responsibility. Therefore, today more than ever, it must be our obligation to recognize and openly address the responsibility shared by many Austrians for the crimes committed during the National Socialist rule", stressed the State Secretary.

Winkler issued an appeal not to underestimate the importance of the European Union, the power of cohesion and of close cooperation. "We have a responsibility toward our youth and our children. Democracy and the rule of law, a life in respect and dignity and in compliance with human rights is often taken for granted, although it is not for granted. There will be no resting on the laurels of European achievements in the future either. Europe is living a conflict between its objectives and its possibilities. Our most urgent task must always be to further advance the European peace project and to overcome problems together, so as to prevent the resurgence of nationalism."

This commemorative event was also attended by Ms. Kathrin Meyer, Executive Secretary of the International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF), which presently is being chaired by Austria.





ZUM GEDENKEN AN DIE WÄHREND DER  
NATIONALSOZIALISTISCHEN DIKTATUR IM  
KZ SACHSENHAUSEN ERMORDETEN, MISS-  
HANDELTEN UND VERFOLGTEN ÖSTERREICHER.

DIE REPUBLIK ÖSTERREICH

