

Hannah M. Lessing

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Austrian Citizenship, Born in Vienna on 26th of April 1963

ACADEMIC HISTORY

Postgraduate education

Nov. 2001 – May 2002 **Federal Academy of Public Administration**
Graduated with honours

Undergraduate

1981 – 1988 **University of Economics, Vienna**
Title awarded: Magistra rer.soc.oec.

Schooling

1968 – 1981 **Lycée Français de Vienne**
Graduation: Baccalauréat (Matura)

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

May 2001 – present **General Settlement Fund and National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism**
Secretary General

Responsibilities include:

- Implementation of the Washington Agreement
Budget responsibility: 210 million USD
- Development of the claims procedure for compensation of victims of National Socialism
- Administrative support of the Arbitration Panel for *In Rem* Restitution
- Management of up to 180 employees (both funds)
- Public relations on a national and international scale
- Negotiations and contacts with international victims organisations
- Informative speeches given to survivors worldwide (USA, Israel, Argentina, England, France...)

July 2000 – January 2001 **Negotiation on restitution issues headed by Under Secretary of State Stuart Eizenstat**
Member of the Austrian team under Ambassador Sucharipa
Negotiations concluded with the Washington Agreement
January 2001

Sept. 1995 – present

National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism

Secretary General

Responsibilities include:

- Administration of the disbursement payments made by the National Fund: 150 million EUR
- Management of Funds amounting to 170 million EUR
- Administration of disbursement of compensation payments for the loss of apartments and household property: 150 million USD
- Administration of the Nazi Persecutee Relief Fund: 11 million USD for projects
- Permanent member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF), Head of the Austrian Delegation since 2005
- Management and Controlling of International Projects for victims of National Socialism
- Informative speeches given to survivors worldwide (USA, Israel, Argentina, England, France etc.)

Since 1997

Teacher of Rhetoric at the following institutions:

- Austrian Ministry of Education
- Chamber of Commerce (Wirtschaftskammer)
- Chamber of Labour (Arbeiterkammer)

Sept. 1990 -
August 1995

Die ERSTE Österreichische Spar-Casse - Bank AG

Senior Area Manager International Financial Institutions

Responsibilities included:

- Responsibility for the client-group foreign banks in Italy, France, Canada, USA, Israel, Turkey and Maghreb
- Responsibility for the Representative Office of the bank
- Product marketing of inter-bank services and products
- Risk-monitoring of specific countries and their banks

January - Sept. 1990

Co. Vetro S.p.a. Industria Vetraria, Milan

Manager of the Central Europe Office in Vienna

Responsibilities included:

- Development of a client network
- Coordination of 27 Italian companies and support of their export activities to Eastern Countries

January - Dec. 1989

Conextrade GesmbH Import-Export, Vienna

Manager of foreign exchange operations

Responsibilities included:

- Compensation and bartertrading in steel, chemicals and foodstuffs between Poland, GDR, CSFR und Israel.

May - October 1988

Grebenu and Son Trading Agency, Tel Aviv

Manager for textile exports to Germany and France

February – May 1988 **Hotel Hilton, Tel Aviv**
Receptionist

AWARDS

April 2009 Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite

September 2007 Shofar of Freedom Award of the Synagoge "Temple Israel" in Albany, New York

July 2001 Silver Medal of Honor for Services to the Republic of Austria

SPEECHES (Selection)

July 2008 Speech on the occasion of the renewed permanent exhibition "NS-Verbrechen gegen 'Minderwertige'" at the Otto-Wagner-Hospital in Steinhof (Vienna), Austria

May 2007 Speech at Sotheby's Restitution Symposium, Vienna: "The National Fund – Activities in Art Restitution"

May 2006 Commemoration speech on the anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp in Mauthausen, Austria

May 2005 Speech before the Austrian Houses of Parliament on the "Austrian Remembrance Day against Violence and Racism in Memory of the Victims of National Socialism", 5th of May.

May 2003 Annual meeting of the American Jewish Committee
Panel with Mme. Simone Weil and Prof. Yehuda Bauer

February 2002 London School of Economics
"Austria dealing with its past"

February 2002 The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House
"Austria's dealing with her past: the practical contribution of the National Fund for Victims of National Socialism"

PUBLICATIONS (Selection)

2007 Co-author with Fiorentina Azizi: Austria confronts her Past. In: Bazylar, Michael J. and Roger P. Alford (Ed.): Holocaust restitution. Perspectives on the litigation and its legacy. New York 2006, p. 226-236

2006 Lessing, Hannah M./Meissner, Renate S./Bjalek, Nina: "Wir können nur anklopfen, wo die Tür offen ist" – Der lange Weg zu Anerkennung und Entschädigung. In: Pawlowsky, Verena/Wendelin, Harald (Ed.): Ausgeschlossen und entrechtet. Vienna 2006 (=Raub und Rückgabe – Österreich von 1938 bis heute, vol. 4), p. 241-259.

- 2006 Lessing, Hannah M./Seidinger Michael R./Fritsch, Claire: Österreichische Aspekte der Kunstrestitution. Die Tätigkeit des Nationalfonds der Republik Österreich für Opfer des Nationalsozialismus im Rahmen der Rückgabe von Kunstgegenständen. In: Kunst und Recht 1/2006, p. 8-13.
- 2006 Lessing, Hannah/Rebernik, Richard/Spitzzy, Nicola: The Austrian General Settlement Fund: An Overview. In: The International Bureau of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (Ed.): Redressing Injustices Through Mass Claims Processes. Innovative Responses to Unique Challenges. Oxford 2006, 95-107.
- 2005 Preface to: Gerhard Botz (Ed.): Schweigen und Reden einer Generation. Erinnerungsgespräche mit Opfern, Tätern und Mitläufern des Nationalsozialismus. Vienna 2005
- 2001 Lessing, Hannah: Wiedergutmachung in Österreich. Von der Unterlassung zur symbolischen Geste. In: Lappin, Eleanore (Ed.): Die Lebendigkeit der Geschichte. (Dis-)Kontinuitäten in Diskursen über den Nationalsozialismus. St. Inbergt 2001, p. 395-407
- 2001 Lessing, Hannah/Meissner, Renate/Scheck, Sylvia: Der Nationalfonds der Republik Österreich für Opfer des Nationalsozialismus. In Horn, Sonia (Ed.): Medizin im Nationalsozialismus. Wege der Aufarbeitung. Wiener Gespräche zur Sozialgeschichte der Medizin. Überarbeitete Vorträge der internationalen Tagung im Psychiatrischen Krankenhaus der Stadt Wien Baumgartner Höhe, 5.-7. November 1998. Vienna 2001, p. 171-184.
- 2000 Lessing, Hannah; Janistyn, Susanne; Meissner, Renate: "In die Tiefe geblickt – Lebensgeschichten von Überlebenden"- Vienna 2000
- 1999 Lessing, Hannah: "Bei uns werden alle berücksichtigt". In: Schulze, Heidrun (Hg.): Wieder gut machen? Enteignung, Zwangsarbeit, Entschädigung, Restitution. Österreich 1938-1945/1945/1999. Vienna/Innsbruck 1999, p. 132-138.

LANGUAGES

- *German*: mother tongue
- *French*: bilingual
- *English*: fluent spoken and written
- *Italian*: fluent spoken, good knowledge written
- *Hebrew*: fluent spoken, basic written
- *Spanish*: good conversational knowledge
- *Russian*: basic knowledge