

# 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

March 2011 – present      Austrian representative in the **International Committee of the  
Auschwitz Foundation** and Member of the Board of the  
**Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance**

December 2010 – present      **Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in  
Austria**  
Secretary General  
Responsibilities:  
Administration of 20 Million Euros for the restoration of the  
Jewish cemeteries throughout Austria

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
- September 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.)
  - Coordination of the redesign of the Austrian exhibition at Auschwitz-Birkenau
- 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      **Grebenau 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)**

- April 2011      Speech at a commemoration ceremony for the victims of the South Eastern Defensive Wall construction in Rechnitz
- January 2009      Speech at the memorial event for the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January in the Asamblea de Madrid, Spain
- 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", 5<sup>th</sup> 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/Spitzky, 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