**Central Compensation Applications Office from Germany’s Remembrance,**

**Responsibility and Future Foundation**

(The Compensation Group of the German Foundation)

In accordance with international agreements which were reached in 1998 and 1999, Germany is paying compensation through the Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Foundation to those who were imprisoned in former Nazi concentration camps and ghettoes, and those who were subjected to forced labour in the Third Reich and occupied territories.

On 8 June 2000, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania passed Resolution NoVIII-1724 “On the Procedure for Compensation from Germany for Lithuanian Nationals”. It charged the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania with processing compensation applications from Lithuanian nationals who suffered, and to pass them to the German Federal Foundation, which deals with compensation. The centre was to receive and pay compensation money until the time a Lithuanian-German partnership organisation had been set up.

Such an organisation has not been established in Lithuania. The compensation payment system was agreed upon during negotiations between Germany, Russia and Lithuania. The centre is to gather, translate and send claimants’ questionnaires and other necessary documents to the Russian Federation Mutual Understanding and Concord Foundation, which allocates compensation. Specialists at the German foundation check and approve the lists of people who are entitled to compensation.  The money is transferred to a special bank account opened with Hansabankas in the name of the centre. The bank distributes the compensation money to claimants’ personal accounts, according to lists approved by the centre. Compensation is paid in two stages.

A total of 22,250 applications have been registered with the centre. Out of the 21,208 questionnaires given out by the centre, 13,981 have been filled in and sent to the Russian Foundation.

From 2001 to 2005, 22,403 compensation payments to recipients were made. The sum of money transferred to recipients’ accounts amounts to 15,387,716.68 euros (Lt53,130,708.15). During those years, the complaints office in Lithuania handled 1,186 complaints; 72 per cent were settled.

The following people, residing permanently in Lithuania until 16 February 1999,are entitled to payments from the German Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Foundation:

* Former prisoners in ghettoes and concentration camps (which are on the official list of concentration camps), DM15,000;
* People who were kept in other places under conditions similar to those in concentration camps on German territory (1937 borders) and in countries occupied by Germany (which are on the list of the German Foundation), up to DM6,000;
* People deported to the German Empire (1937 borders) or to territories occupied by Germany and forced to work in factories, the public sector or the public utilities sector under conditions similar to imprisonment, DM4,200.

Under  German law, being a prisoner of war does not make a person eligible for compensation. However, if a prisoner of war was kept in a concentration camp (on the official list of concentration camps) or lost the status of a prisoner of war, was deported and used for forced labour, he has the right to claim payment.

If a Nazi victim who was entitled to compensation died after 15 February 1999, then the payment is made to the legal heirs.

The surviving partner and children are entitled to compensation. If they are dead, the grandchildren are entitled to it; if there are no grandchildren then their brothers and sisters may claim it. If the brothers and sisters are also deceased, the heirs specified in the will have a right to make an application.

**Applications and other documents**

The claimant proves his right to receive compensation with an application and documents: archival certificates, Second World War passports, work records, card-receipts, card-substitutes, entry permits to the enterprise, insurance policies, and others.

Individuals who were minors at the time their parents were held must gather information about their parents, with whom they were taken to places of forced labour.

Claimants have the right to appeal to the Central Applications Office or the Russian Federation Mutual Understanding and Concord Foundation, which must assist them in their search for the necessary documents, confirming their right to compensation.

All services in rendering help to claimants for compensation from the Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Foundation, as well as searching for necessary documents, are free of charge.

It is recommended that enquiries to the International Search Service in Arolsen, as well as to other German archives, be sent through the Central Applications Office or the Mutual Understanding and Concord Foundation in the Russian Federation.

In the absence of documents, the law envisages the right to compensation on the basis of other reliable information, including eyewitness evidence. It is necessary, however, that at least one of the witnesses present an archival document to prove that at that time he himself was kept there or worked in the same enterprise or for the same owner as the victim.

The Law on the Founding of the Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Foundation of the German Federal Republic stipulates additional payments for “other damage inflicted on a person”, for those who suffered severe damage at the hands of the Nazis. People who were used for medical experiments, children from children’s homes if their health was badly damaged, and parents whose children died in homes for children of forced labourers belong first of all to this category. Also, individuals whose mental or physical health suffered grave or very grave damage, which caused a chronic deterioration in their physical and/or mental condition. The right to this compensation is confirmed by documents about being in places where medical experiments were conducted, about suffering trauma or damage during forced labour, expert medical conclusions, and so on. In cases where such documents are unavailable, other reliable information can be submitted.

The Central Applications Office sends all application forms No 1, 2, 3 or 4 accepted for consideration, together with documents attached, to the Mutual Understanding and Concord Foundation. The organisation to which the corresponding application was submitted will inform every claimant about the decisions taken (the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, or the Russian Mutual Understanding and Concord Foundation).

The language of the application and the documents attached are immaterial importance and do not need be translated into German, Lithuanian or Russian. The claimant bears no additional expenses.

Compensation is paid directly to the claimant. The Law on the Foundation forbids the transfer of the payment to other persons.

All payments made by the fund are tax free and do not affect other social payments.

**Appeals**

Individuals who have submitted application forms No 1, 2, 3 or 4 to the Central Compensation Applications Office at the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania and disagree with decisions taken by the Experts Commission of the Russian Foundation (the size of the compensation, etc), can appeal to the Appeals Branch, which will work in Lithuania. The branch will consist of one Lithuanian representative, one Russian representative and one German representative (the chairman). Claimants who have sent analogous applications directly to the Russian foundation will be able to appeal to the Appeals Commission of the foundation in Moscow.

The foundation’s decision can be appealed against until the date stated in the notice.

The decision taken by the Appeals Commission or Appeals Branch is final and can not be appealed against.

The Russian Federation Mutual Understanding and Concord Foundation is a partnership organisation based on the Law on the Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Foundation of the German Federal Republic.

The Central Compensation Applications Office is based on the Law on the Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Foundation of the German Federal Republic at the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania.