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Continued progress in the restoration of the Jewish cemeteries in Austria

22 Nov 2018

With the support of the Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria the renovation of two cemeteries in Burgenland was able to be successfully completed to coincide with the Year of Remembrance 2018: the cemeteries Lackenbach and Kobersdorf were restored in keeping with monument protection regulations. Prof. Wehdorn acted on behalf of the Fund as the specialist supervisor and the completed work on the cemeteries was approved by the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments in autumn 2018. The cemeteries will be maintained by the local municipalities from 1 January 2019 for a period of 20 years.

“The restoration of the cemetery in Lackenbach, which has now reached completion, is an important contribution to the preservation of the Jewish cemeteries in Austria. I also see this step as a clear sign of responsible and dignified remembrance, which we have promised to Austria’s Jewish community,” stated National Council President Wolfgang Sobotka, Chairperson of the Fund’s Board of Trustees.

The restoration of the Jewish cemeteries in Austria will be subsidized with federal funds to the extent of one million Euros every year until 2030 in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions. The cost of the restorations are equally borne by the government and the cemetery owner; the latter is granted a period of five years within which to meet its financial obligation. Applications for funding must be submitted by the cemetery owner; they are decided on by the Board of Trustees of the Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria.

In recent years the Board of Trustees has awarded funding in the amount of ca. 4.3 million Euros. In 2018, over the course of two sessions the Fund’s Board of Trustees awarded federal funding totaling approx. 3.6 million Euros.

Hannah Lessing, Secretary General of the Fund, welcomed the successful outcome of the funded projects. “Jewish cemeteries are places of remembrance. I am delighted that we have been able to work together so fruitfully to preserve a piece of our shared history.”

Work is currently ongoing at a number of cemeteries in Austria – in Baden, Göttzbach/Ybbs, Graz, Hohenems, Klosterneuburg, Währing in Vienna and at the Vienna Central Cemetery. While the work in Hohenems is expected to be completed in 2019, the larger cemeteries in Graz and Baden will take longer to restore. In particular, the Viennese cemeteries will require support and funding over a longer period of time: for the cemetery in Währing alone, over 700,000 Euros have already been awarded for the initial stages of the renovation and measures to archeologically secure the site. At gates 1 and 4 of the Central Cemetery, where there is an area totaling 50 hectares that must be overseen, comprehensive and work on pruning and clearing has been started.

Eli Rosen, President of the Jewish Communities of Graz and Baden and responsible for the Jewish cemeteries since autumn 2018 sees what has been achieved in a positive light: “The Jewish Community Vienna has been following the ongoing efforts of the Cemeteries Fund to restore Jewish last places of rest in Austria with immense satisfaction. The establishment of the Fund brought about the long-needed creation of the necessary framework to preserve the vitally important sites of Jewish heritage in Austria.”

The website of the Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria contains information of all of the renovation projects.

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[Picture galleries of restored cemeteries](#)