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Architect Martin Kohlbauer commissioned to design the Austrian National Exhibition at Auschwitz

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Following a Europe-wide call to tender, the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism has commissioned the architect Martin Kohlbauer to design the new Austrian national exhibition at the Auschwitz memorial.

The ten-member Board of Appraisal selected the proposal by Austrian architect Martin Kohlbauer as the winning entry among the many submissions. He will now be responsible for realizing the exhibition concept developed by Hannes Sulzenbacher and Albert Lichtblau's curatorial team of academics for Block 17 of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

Born in Vienna in 1956, the recipient of the prestigious Loos Award studied Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts under Gustav Peichl. As an architect and state-certified civil engineer, Kohlbauer was responsible for realizing projects such as the Sophienspital Socio-Medical Center and the high-rise building "Galaxy 21" in Vienna. In addition, he has designed over 60 exhibitions in the German-speaking world, many of them in Jewish museums, for example in Vienna, Berlin and Munich. In 2005 he was responsible for designing the interior of the exhibition "The New Austria" at the Upper Belvedere, which marked the anniversary of the signing of the Austrian State Treaty. Most recently, he chaired the jury for the memorial to the victims of Nazi court martial, opened on Vienna's Ballhausplatz in 2014.

"It is with great pleasure and also due respect that I assume responsibility for the design of this especially important project", stated Kohlbauer: "In my opinion, justice can only be done to this subject with a minimalist approach. This is also in keeping with the basic tenor of the highly intelligent and powerful curatorial concept. With a very clear and simple room-in-room concept, I have attempted to do justice to the parameters and ideas as far as content is concerned, and to the wholly unfathomable nature of this place.

The Secretary General of the National Fund, Hannah Lessing, on Kohlbauer's appointment: "I'm glad that an innovative and directional exhibition concept will now be implemented by an experienced designer who is extremely well-acquainted with this subject-matter".