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Hannah M. Lessing awarded the “Chevalier de l’Ordre National du Mérite”

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This Thursday, 2 April 2009, at the French Embassy, Hannah Lessing, Secretary General of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism and the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism will be named “Chevalier dans l’Ordre National du Mérite” by the French Ambassador S.E. Philippe Carré.

The award, conferred by the President Nicolas Sarkozy, acknowledges Hannah Lessing’s services to Austrian survivors of the Holocaust who live in France today.

Through the Funds, Hannah Lessing has been serving people who were victims of the Nazi regime for 14 years. Around 300 of the 30,000 applicants are living in France at present.

The National Fund collaborates closely with the French Restitution Commission, the Mémorial de la Shoah, the Jewish Museum and the Documentation Centre, as well as the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, which since 2000 has, similarly to the National Fund, been funding projects in the fields of historical research and education relating to the Holocaust, remembrance, assistance and Jewish culture.

The “Ordre National du Mérite” is France’s second-highest decoration.