

Statement to the Press

German-Czech Delegation visits Holocaust survivors from Northern Bohemia

Frankfurt am Main/ Tel Aviv – Late last month a delegation comprised of Czechs and Germans visited former citizens of Žatec (Saaz), who found a new home in Israel after surviving the Holocaust. Conducting interviews with these witnesses to history will be part of a documentation on Jewish culture in Žatec before World War II, which is to be presented at an exhibition in Žatec. The exhibition will include a documentation on the Czech assistance to the newly founded State of Israel, which was organized via the military airport located in Žatec and helped in the foundation of the Jewish state. Further witnesses were interviewed on this subject. Israeli media also commented on the North-Bohemian cities of Žatec and Teplice v Cechach as holiday destinations.

The delegation was comprised of representatives of the German Development Association for the City of Saaz/ Žatec, the Czech Fellow Countrymen and Friends of the City of Žatec and the Jewish Community Teplice v Cechach, today also in charge of Žatec. The project Jews in Žatec aims to make the Czech public and especially the younger generation in Žatec acquainted with the mostly unknown lives and destinies of Jews in the city and shire of Žatec.

Otokar Löbl, chairman of the German Development Association and the project's initiator, said: 'The documentation of Jewish life in Žatec before World War II from records and oral history will present actual persons who survived the Holocaust and found a new home in Israel. We want to show how they once lived in Žatec and participated in its economic and social life. Efforts like these may stand against the weak, concealed but still existing anti-Semitism.' Löbl also advocates the restoration and preservation of traces of Jewish culture, especially the Jewish graveyard and the famous synagogue.

Interviewing the witnesses was a touching moment. The Israelis, aged to 80 and 90 years, told with radiant eyes of their youth in Žatec. 'It was the first time that they got visitors from their former native country apart from relatives.' said Otokar Löbl.

The delegation was supported by the Czech ambassador in Israel: 'Master Tomas Pojar welcomed our activities and offered his help and cooperation', stated the chairman of the Fellow Countrymen and Friends, Petr Šimáček. 'Thanks to his support, we were able to seek out some of the few former citizens of Žatec as well as Israeli veterans whose testimonies and memories were subject of the documentary film we made.'

The Chairman of the Jewish Community Teplitz, Oldrich Latar, was very satisfied with the outcome of the journey: 'The project of the Development Association very much contributes to goals of our community. It's not just the destinies of people from Žatec and the surrounding communities we were able to document, and thus preserve invaluable information for future generations. We also rejoiced those people with the memories of their earlier life. Mr Löbl excellently prepared this mission which represents a milestone for our future collaboration.'

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Andreas Kalckhoff, Spokesman



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Der Förderverein der Stadt Saaz/ Žatec ist im Vereinsregister des Amtsgerichts Schwabach unter der Nr. 611 eingetragen.

Mit Bescheid des Zentralfinanzamts Nürnberg vom 17.02.2004, Az. K10/GD 108/32474 dient der Förderverein der Stadt Saaz/ Žatec e.V. ausschließlich und unmittelbar steuerbegünstigten gemeinnützigen Zwecken im Sinne der §§ 51 ff. AO.