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# Press Release

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## **The commemoration of the Shoah requires more than an annual memorial wreath!**

*"Remembrance of the Shoah does not consist in laying a wreath once a year on 27 January, but in ignoring necessary measures for the rebirth of Jewish culture! In order to recognize and preserve the importance of the Jewish heritage for European culture, we need a holistic approach to remembrance that combines the dimensions of science and research with historical mediation and remembrance and finally comprehensively fulfills the obligations of the Federal Republic of Germany to make amends,"* explains **Brigitte Freihold**, remembrance policy expert of the left-wing parliamentary group DIE LINKE on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January. Freihold continues:

"During the "Operation Reinhardt" alone, which represents the core of the Shoah, more than two million Polish Jews, as well as Sinti and Roma, were murdered according to the plan between March 1942 and November 1943 in the German extermination camps Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor established for this purpose. A total of six million Jews were killed in the Shoah, almost all of which exterminated Jewish life in Europe. Our responsibility today is not only to remember the atrocities of the Germans but also to support the rebirth of Jewish life in Europe in many ways, to promote cultural diversity and to recognize the contribution of Jewish communities to Europe's cultural heritage.

To this end, a holistic policy of remembrance must finally be pursued in the Federal Republic of Germany, which also illustrates current forms of anti-Semitism and populism that underscore the failure of established ways of commemoration. In concrete terms, this means that both the obligations from the Washington Principles concerning the Restitution of Stolen Cultural Property and Judaica and the Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets in regard of identification and preservation of Jewish Mass graves and Cemeteries, which are threatened with decay by mass extermination, must be put into practice. In the course of this, it is also necessary to make the preservation of existing Jewish cemeteries, which are to be understood as part of the European cultural heritage, a core element of educational measures in order to strengthen awareness of the contribution of Jews to Europe's broader cultural heritage. In addition, comprehensive steps must be taken to identify mass graves under rabbinical law, especially with regard to the numerous yet unknown shooting sites of Sinti and Roma and Jews from "Operation Reinhardt." 140,000 euros in start-up financing by the Federal Government for measures in Poland are necessary for this.

These contributions are essential for the rebirth of Jewish life and culture in Europe after the Shoah and thus offer the opportunity to remember and remember for all time the unparalleled history and legacy of the Shoah for future generations."

Berlin, 25.01.2019