

Austria Offers Additional Benefits For Victims Of National Socialism



(NAPSA)—On January 31, 2001 the Austrian National Council unanimously adopted a General Settlement Fund Law for the comprehensive settlement of open questions of compensation and restitution for victims of National Socialism. The General Settlement Fund Law provides for the disbursement of additional social benefits (nursing allowance and preferential pension rights) as well as for the establishment of a General Settlement Fund endowed with U.S. \$210 million. These benefits were subject to the requirement that all pending class action suits filed in U.S. courts against the Republic of Austria and/or Austrian companies be dismissed or withdrawn.

However, on January 30, 2002, as a humanitarian gesture to the elderly victims of National Socialism, the Austrian National Council passed an amendment to provide for the disbursement of these additional social benefits notwithstanding the still outstanding dismissal of the lawsuits as required under the agreement. As of March 1, 2002, upon entry in to force of the new amendment, the following additional social benefits will be provided:

1. *Disbursement of nursing allowances up to category 7 to victims of National Socialism living*

abroad. Until now such persons were entitled to an allowance corresponding to category 2. Persons who between March 4, 1933 and May 9, 1945 emigrated on political grounds or grounds of religion or origin and who now live abroad as a consequence of such emigration will—under the requirements of the Federal Law on Nursing Allowance—be entitled to a monthly payment corresponding to the respective amount of nursing allowance up to category 7.

2. *Extension of the preferential right to retroactively purchase pension rights for persons who were born between January 1, 1933 and March 12, 1938.*

Persons who were born between January 1, 1933 and March 12, 1938 and had their domicile in the territory of the Republic of Austria on March 12, 1938 may—under the other requirements of Section 502 of the General Social Security Act—pay contributions to the pension system for the time of emigration at a preferential rate. Contributions may also be paid retroactively for the time after March 31, 1959, for a maximum of 180 months.

3. *No requirement of citizenship for pensions under Section 11 of the Victims Assistance Act.*

Persons who were refused an official certificate because of lack

of Austrian citizenship after April 27, 1945 will be entitled to a pension according to Section 11 of the Victims Assistance Act.

4. *Abolition of the 6 years of age limit in Section 1 (2) lit. f of the Victims Assistance Act (forced emigration).*

The group of entitled persons under the Victims Assistance Act will be enlarged by abolishing the minimum requirement of 6 years of age of applicants at the time of forced emigration on political grounds, or grounds of race, origin, religion or nationality. Such emigration must have lasted at least three and a half years.

For further information regarding benefits under the Victims Assistance Act please contact: Amt der Wiener Landesregierung Magistratsabteilung 12, Referat Opferfürsorge, Schottenring 24, A-1010 Wien; Tel. 43/1/531 14-85376.

For all other inquiries concerning pension rights under the General Social Security Act and nursing allowances, application forms for nursing allowances and old age and survivors' (widow and widower) pensions please contact the nearest Austrian Embassy/Consulate in the U.S.

Embassy of Austria, 3524 International Court, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008 Tel. 202-895-6719.