

Institute of National Remembrance

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Statement by the Institute of National Remembrance

In answer to the feature *En France, 54 personnes perçoivent encore une pension pour avoir collaboré avec le régime nazi* [In France 54 persons still receive monthly pensions for the collaboration with the Nazi regime] of 22 February 2019 at: https://www.francetvinfo.fr/sciences/histoire/en-france-54-personnes-percoivent-encore-une-pension-pour-avoir-collabore-avec-le-regime-nazi_3202961.html,

the aforementioned material suggesting that in Poland there are individuals receiving such benefits from Germany, the Polish Institute of National Remembrance notifies that:

The President of the Institute of National Remembrance is issuing a

letter to the German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which is quoted by the AFP in the article, requesting information whether press reports are a reflection of the facts. In the case such benefits are paid, we are asking to specify their actual number alongside with the information for what reasons and within which categories they are paid to Polish citizens.

The Second Polish Republic was the first state in the world to mount armed resistance to the German aggression. Despite the occupation of its territory by totalitarian states – the aggressors – it remained an Allied Country, fighting against the German Reich. Due to military aggression, the country was subjected to ruthless occupation and totalitarian terror. As a result of the Second World War, about 5.9 million Polish citizens were killed - half of that number being the Jewish population.

Any form of individual collaboration of a Polish citizen with the German occupant meant betrayal of the Fatherland and breaking the rules binding on citizens of the Polish state. Created under occupation, under the auspices of the pre-war Polish authorities, the Polish Underground State punished active German collaborators with death.

From among Polish citizens subjected to German occupation, a huge number of Polish citizens were deported from the occupied territories to slave forced labour in the Third Reich.

Another circumstance is the fact that in 1945, as a result of territorial changes within the Polish border, a significant number of earlier

citizens of the German Reich found themselves in Polish territory.

The activities of the German government and the German state with regard to the payment of pensions / compensation under the German legislation of 1951 have never been consulted with Poland. We express the unequivocal opinion that if the German state paid out any pensions for the collaboration with the German Reich, it would be a scandal.

Furthermore, we draw your attention to the danger of confusing the benefits category; another thing is the payment by Germany of symbolic compensation for Polish citizens - victims of German persecution, such as:

- imprisonment in German prisons and ghettos;
- imprisonment in the so-called Polenlager camps in Silesia;
- deportation due to being enrolled in the Third Reich's forced labour scheme for a period of at least 6 months;
- persecution against children born and staying in concentration camps, prisons and Polenlager camps, and "children of the Holocaust"

who did not exceed 16 years of age at the time of persecution.

Compensation was also paid to people who as children were:

- deported with their parents for forced labour or born during deportation;
- deprived of parental care as a result of the persecution by German wartime authorities;
- forcibly Germanized;
- enrolled in forced labour in the place of residence before reaching the age of 16.

In the abovementioned cases the amount of compensation granted was dependent on the type and duration of the repression. The benefits paid were not a reparation, but a symbolic humanitarian help from Germany for victims of German persecution in Poland, **which is**

why it is unacceptable and harmful to the victims to manipulate facts and put persecuted people in a line with the perpetrators.

In connection with the above, we would like to draw the attention of the editorial staff of franceinfo that any form of fact manipulation that obliterates the difference between perpetrators and persecutors is offensive to the victims of German terror. We are also going to address Arte TV, which in its German language version, in the material of 25 February 2019 (now unavailable), reportedly included false information on this subject.

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