

PRESS RELEASE

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Indexing and presenting sources about compensation for National Socialist injustice

FIZ Karlsruhe, the State Archives of Baden-Württemberg and the Federal Ministry of Finance are launching a joint pilot project for the digital indexing of compensation files. The information will be bundled in a thematic portal and made available online for research, educational, and other purposes.

Karlsruhe, September 07, 2020 – The term compensation for injustice summarizes the measures taken by Germany to provide material compensation to those persecuted by National Socialism. This does not mean that the injustice they suffered can be compensated by the benefits granted. In addition to the compensation paid directly and personally to the victims concerned, the future focus will also be on what lessons can be learned from the crimes committed against humanity under National Socialism and how these lessons can be passed on to future generations.

An important prerequisite for this is to index and present all relevant sources. The associated knowledge should also be referenced, consolidated and made accessible at a central place - linked with historical, legal and filed information. This information is to be presented in a thematic portal as an offer for relatives or descendants of the victims, for scientific purposes and for the interested worldwide public.

The pilot project

In July 2020, with the signing of an agreement between the responsible Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF) and the State Archives of Baden-Württemberg, a pilot project was approved, which is intended to make expertly accessible the files of the *Landesamt für die Wiedergutmachung* (state office for compensation) at *Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg* from the period from 1945 to the 1970s. Most of these files are general administrative documents such as card indexes, information material, reports, statistics, evaluations and correspondence of the authority. The project is supposed to run until the end of 2022. FIZ Karlsruhe as a partner of the State Archives contributes to this project chiefly the scientific-technical expertise from its research unit [Information Service Engineering \(ISE\)](#).

Prof. Dr. Harald Sack, Vice President ISE at FIZ Karlsruhe: “The pilot project is the logical continuation of our close cooperation with the State Archives and at the same time a prominent example of FIZ Karlsruhe’s increased involvement in the research field of the Digital Humanities - located at the interface between computer science, the humanities and cultural sciences as well as the associated methods and institutions“.

FIZ Karlsruhe’s contribution in the pilot project accordingly covers the steps following the digitization and structuring of the files, namely the subsequent application of automatic text and pattern recognition methods to the digital image files generated. This is to determine the potential of machine learning methods for the complete content indexing and the future online availability of the data.

A future thematic portal “Wiedergutmachung nationalsozialistischen Unrechts“ (Compensation for National Socialist Injustice) is intended to provide standardized digital access to all information indexed in the project – as part of the nationwide Archivportal-D, a sub-project of the German Digital Library (<https://www.archivportal-d.de/>). Archivportal-D was created from 2012 to 2017 to make institutional information, archival indexing services and digitized and digital archival material available on the Internet for scholarly use centrally and comprehensively.

For more information visit the website of FIZ Karlsruhe:

<https://www.fiz-karlsruhe.de/de/forschung/information-service-engineering>

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