

Welcome address by **Günter Saathoff**,
Co-Director of the Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future”
at the opening of the 25th World Conference of the “World Federation of Jewish Child
Survivors of the Holocaust and Descendants”
in the Hotel Hilton Berlin at 18:00 h on 24 August 2014

Excellencies, Ambassador Emerson and Ambassador Hadas-
Handelsman,
Governing Mayor Wowereit,
President Seltzer, Mr Lezer, Mr Hilkowitz and Mr Sonntag,
Mr Graumann, Mr Schuster and Mr Kent,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The groups of Jewish Child Survivors from different countries
have been meeting at international conferences for a quarter of
a century – and now this year they are holding the event in
Berlin for the first time.

I am very pleased that we have been able to fund this meeting
outside our regular funding programmes this year. I would like
to bid you all a very warm welcome, being fully aware of the
fact that this meeting in Berlin is by no means a natural
occurrence, especially for survivors of the Holocaust, the Shoah.

But what is “natural” after the Shoah? The traces of this crime
against humanity have been etched deeply into the souls of the
survivors and their children. They have come together so that
they are not left to cope with this alone.

And at the same time the question they put to us is:
what do we perceive of the traces left behind and the
permanent consequences among the survivors of the National
Socialist crimes. We have to decide between wanting to know

and denial, between empathy and indifference. And we have to take on responsibility today.

In one of its three activity areas, the Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” – known by its German acronym EVZ – funds and supports civil society projects to benefit survivors of National Socialist injustice in Eastern and Central Europe and in Israel.

We want to contribute to the survivors being able to find respect and recognition and to spend the last years of their lives in dignity.

Many survivors of National Socialist persecution and their descendants are traumatised and sick as a result of the persecution. Furthermore many of them live in crushing poverty. The tribulations of old age aggravate the symptoms left behind by persecution. Moreover this applies for Jewish and non-Jewish victims of National Socialist persecution.

The Foundation EVZ is currently focusing on projects that help to overcome the isolation of survivors, to improve their social situation and their medical care.

One of the Foundation’s largest funding programmes is the so called “Dialogue Forum”, a programme that aims to counteract this social isolation of victims of National Socialism.

We can say of this present evening that we are opening a major “Dialogue Forum” here that will run for a few days. I wish you beneficial encounters, stimulating discussions and encouraging impulses for your further work.