



Azize Tank

Member of the German Bundestag

Platz der Republik 1, 11011 Berlin

☎ 49 (0) 30 227 – 77851

📠 49 (0) 30 227 – 76851

✉ azize.tank@bundestag.de

Press release

No exceptions for the payment of pensions to former ghetto labourers – Roma as well as Jewish Women and Men in Poland must be included immediately!

“It is cynical and scandalous that Roma as well as Jewish women and men residing in Poland who worked in inhumane conditions in ghettos under German occupation continue to be excluded from ghetto pensions from Germany. The Federal Government’s ministry draft on the Act regarding the conditions for making pensions payable on the basis of employment in a ghetto (Gesetz zur Zahlbarmachung von Renten aus Beschäftigungen in einem Ghetto - ZRBG) does nothing to change this either and once again excludes numerous people from the provisions to enable the payment of ghetto pensions – a flagrant breach of elementary principles of the German social insurance system, which ghetto labourers had to pay contributions towards at the time. This is a key part of their basic right to social security that the Federal Government is disregarding, in terms of binding European standards as well,” states Azize Tank, Spokesperson for Social Human Rights and member of the Committee on Labour and Social Affairs in response to the Answer of the Federal Government to the Minor Interpellation: “Enabling the payment of ghetto pensions to Jewish resistance fighters and Jewish women and men residing in Poland (Bundestag printed paper 18/1279)”. Azize Tank goes on to state:

“The Federal Government is hiding behind a Social Insurance Agreement with Poland adopted in 1975, which according to the statement issued by the Polish insurance organisation ZUS, however, cannot be applied to employment in a ghetto. The 2002 Act regarding the conditions for making pensions payable on the basis of employment in a ghetto (Gesetz zur Zahlbarmachung von Renten aus Beschäftigungen in einem Ghetto - ZRBG) has created a completely new legal situation which has to be adjusted with regard to the entitlements of Jewish women and men from Poland.

With the revision of the ZRBG, the Federal Government continues to exclude the possibility of a holistic solution for all former ghetto labourers. This is an untenable and completely unjustifiable situation of unequal treatment which must be done away with immediately! I am disappointed that after the meeting between the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs on 30 April in Warsaw, the Federal Government has failed to make any concrete commitments. Once again the resolution of the problem has been postponed to some indefinite point in the future (cf Answer of the Federal Government to my oral question, Bundestag printed paper 18/1293).

It is the very height of cynicism when eligible Roma as well as Jewish women and men have already been kept waiting more than ten years for the ZRBG Act to be revised, only then to be told once again that they will not be taken into account by the Federal Government. The governing coalition of the CDU/CSU and SPD is obviously banking on a biological solution to the problem. What is more, the approval rate under the previous Act was scandalously low as it was. The approval procedure continues to lack transparency and to clearly be designed to be able to approve as few applications for ghetto pensions as possible. The Federal Government must propose a holistic means of payment immediately for all Roma as well as Jewish women and men who have been excluded from ghetto pensions to date. Payments must not be delayed any longer!”

Berlin, 16 April 2014