



MINISTER
KULTURY I DZIEDZICTWA NARODOWEGO
Bogdan Zdrojewski

Warsaw, March 13, 2008

DDN/589/2008

**Members of the Commission
on Security and
Cooperation in Europe**

Dear Sirs,

The Polish government sees more than 1,000 years of coexistence of Poles and Jews primarily as an obligation to commemorate those who over the centuries have influenced and shaped Polish cultural and social life. It is also our responsibility to pass the memory and heritage of the Polish-Jewish world on to the younger generations.

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is a institution, established on the basis of an agreement, concluded on 25th January 2005 by the Minister of Culture Waldemar Dąbrowski, the Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw Lech Kaczyński and the Jewish Historical Institute Association in Poland, in which the purpose, organisation and financing of the future Museum were defined. In accordance with the founding agreement and other trilateral agreements, including the one of June 2005 on cooperation on the History Museum of Polish Jews, the Minister of Culture pledged to provide from the state budget resources in the amount of 40 million złotych to carry out the joint investment project involving the construction of the Museum building. The Warsaw Municipal authorities committed themselves to contribute another 40 million złotych, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute offered 20 million złotych to finance the costs of the future permanent exhibition. It was assumed that the total cost of building the Museum of the History of Polish Jews would not exceed 80 million złotych.

The concluded agreements have served as the basis for developing a long-range programme entitled 'The Building of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews', adopted by the government in July 2005, which defines the public-spending schedule of the Minister and the City of Warsaw in 2006-2009.

The competition for the Museum's architectural design was won by Finnish architects Rainer Mahlamäki and Ilmar Lahdelma. Since the main construction work is due to be carried out in 2008-2009, a resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2007 revised the 2006-2009 spending schedule for public funds.

Apart from pursuing this investment project, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, as the Museum's organiser, is also financing its current activities on the basis of general principles in an amount that is agreed annually. A gradual increase in the financial contribution as per the ongoing construction of the Museum complex and the development of its activities has been agreed. In 2006, the Museum received 500,000 zlotys, and during the 2007 fiscal year the subsidy amounted to 1,064,000 zlotys. The sum of one million zlotys has been allocated to the Museum in 2008. At present, the most important issue is to raise and secure additional funds towards the museum's construction. According to the latest cost estimate, submitted by the designer of the Arkkitehtitoimisto Lahdelma & Mahlamäki Oy firm, the cost of the investment has grown to 235 million zlotys.

In view of the above, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, appreciating the Museum's unique rank and significance, has declared his readiness to sign an annexe to the above-mentioned agreement concluded in June 2005, prepared by the City of Warsaw, in which the terms of the Museum's further financing—taking account of the financial capabilities of the parties to the agreement—will be defined. The act of signing will be the next important step taken to continue the project, crucial as the point of reference for all those worldwide interested in the Polish Jews' heritage as well as a visible sign of breakthrough in the Polish-Jewish relations.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'P. K.', written in a cursive style.



Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz
Mayor of Warsaw

Warszawa, March 7th, 2008.

To: Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission)
With reference to: a hearing on the support declared by the US Government for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews

STATEMENT

Distinguished Members of the Commission,

I am honored to have the privilege of addressing you in my capacity as the Mayor of Warsaw, a proud and beautiful city of 1.7 million people, that symbolizes all that is great and eternal in the history of Poland.

A city that has been doomed to death by Nazi Germany and has against all odds risen from the ashes.

A city which treasures its history and that has since 1989 when the Solidarity movements resulted in the restoration of Poland to the family of democratic nations, been paying homage to those important fragments of its history which the communist regime had tried to obscure and falsify.

A city whose inhabitants and whose leaders feel deeply that the life and history of the Jewish people, in Warsaw as well as all over Poland, the Jewish culture and tradition that flourished in Poland for centuries, needs to be not only remembered but also taught to the generations to come. So that the young people of the free Republic of Poland grow in the spirit of respect towards the traditions and culture that is and unquestionable part of our common heritage. And that the young Jews of the world understand somewhat better what Poland once was and what it is today. So that all visitors to Warsaw, learn more about the life, culture, the civilization that once was and ended in the horrors of the Nazi-imposed destruction.

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is a special project, of significance not only for the people of Warsaw and Poland, but whose influence shall reach far beyond the borders of our country.

The project is being carried out within a unique public-private partnership, in which the private donators are represented by the Association Jewish Historical Institute in Poland, while the public – by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Capital City of Warsaw. In this process, Warsaw not only co-finances, in equal parts with the Ministry of Culture, the Museum project. The Capital City of Warsaw has also been vested with the honorable responsibility of erecting the building top house the Museum.

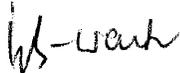
As the Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw, I wish to declare that building the Museum of the History of Polish Jews is a priority project of the Warsaw local authorities. I am also happy to tell you that supplementary design works shall be completed by the end of March 2008, which shall permit to announce a tender to select the contractor for the Museum's in April. I also wish to confirm that formal procedures have been started to update the costs of building the Museum from the level assumed in 2005, at the moment of agreements' execution, to the level of present valuation being an element of the architectural design.

We expect to have the project completed by the end of 2010.

Everybody – my predecessors, Mr. Lech Kaczyński, now President of Republic of Poland; Mr. Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz; as well as the present Polish Government headed by Prime Minister, Mr. Donald Tusk – support the project to the best of their capabilities. The project unites all political and social organizations in Poland. As the Mayor of Warsaw, a city co-created for ages by its Jewish inhabitants, I am determined to make everything, to make the Museum of the History of Polish Jews available, as soon as possible, to Poland, Europe and the world, and to have its mission of commemorating the heritage of Polish Jews, a great and important lesson of tolerance and mutual respect, carried out.

Esteemed Congressmen and Senators, co-authors of the Bill stipulating support for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw – thanking you for this important initiative, I wish to give my best regards to you on behalf of the City's inhabitants who in the names of important places in Warsaw, pay everyday homage to the Founding Fathers and to great American friends of Poland, such as President Woodrow Wilson, the people, to whom Poland owes so much.

Hanna Gronkiewicz Waltz

Handwritten signature of Hanna Gronkiewicz Waltz in cursive script.

Background

Below I wish to present the steps that have been made towards building the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

- January 25, 2005: execution of an agreement on establishment of a cultural institute named the “Museum of the History of Polish Jews” between the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, the Capital City of Warsaw – as the organizers, and the Association Jewish Historical Institute – as the co-founder of the Museum.
- June 30, 2005: execution of a cooperation agreement between the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, and the Capital City of Warsaw, related to performance of a project named the “Museum of the History of Polish Jews”.
- July 11, 2005: Resolution No. LVI/1541/2005 of the Council of the Capital City of Warsaw on establishment of a cultural institute named the “Museum of the History of Polish Jews”.
- Pursuant to the January 25, 2005 agreement, the Minister and the City undertook to provide funds of PLN 40,000,000 (US \$ 16,000,000) each, for carrying out a joint project of building a facility to house a cultural institute named the “Museum of the History of Polish Jews” and to provide the Museum with funds needed to carry out the Museum’s statutory activities, in equal sums, determined by both parties in structuring the budget for each fiscal year.
- in 2005, the task named “Building the Museum of the History of Polish Jews” was included in the Long-term Investing Plan, and each year, the City’s budget assigns funds for the project and for the Museum’s statutory activities.
- In the years 2005-06, a contest for the building’s architectural design was announced and resolved, and the project was assigned to the City Development Authority as the Investor’s Representative, acting in the name and on behalf of the City and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.
- June 26, 2007: the foundation deed was laid to build the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, in the presence of President of Republic of Poland, Mr. Lech Kaczyński; Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Mr. Kazimierz Ujazdowski; Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw, Ms. Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz; Israel’s Ambassador to Warsaw, Mr. David Peleg, special envoy of President of the United States, Mr. Tevi D. Troy, former President of Germany, Mr. Richard von Weizsäcker, Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Mr. Meir Lau; and other guests from Poland and the whole world.
- At this moment, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews project is in the performance stage. Its cost has grown significantly, compared to the provisions of the June 30, 2005 agreement. This is due to, among other things, a low rate of exchange of the American dollar, growth of the costs of material and labor. It will be necessary to execute an addendum to the agreement, in which the total cost of completion of the Museum’s building shall be determined, pursuant to expert opinions, on the level of PLN 200,000,000 (US \$ 85,000,000).

H. Ujazdowski