



January 23, 2020

75th anniversary of the liberation – International Auschwitz Committee and Volkswagen remember Holocaust victims

- HR Board Member Gunnar Kilian accepts invitation to international commemoration event in Poland
- Minute's silence for the victims of forced labor, persecution and racial hatred under National Socialism
- Opening of exhibition "Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe. Photographs and poems on the Shoa"
- Free-of-charge concert of the Israeli National Arts High School, Tel Aviv at the CongressPark in Wolfsburg

Wolfsburg/Berlin/Oświęcim – On Monday, January 27, the liberation of Auschwitz 75 years ago will be commemorated throughout the world. During these days, the International Auschwitz Committee (IAC) and Volkswagen will be holding commemorative events in remembrance of the millions of people who were deported, consigned to forced labor, persecuted and murdered during the Nazi dictatorship. On Monday, HR Board Member Gunnar Kilian will be laying a wreath for the victims of National Socialism on the stone of remembrance at Volkswagen's Wolfsburg plant. In the afternoon, Kilian will be taking part in the international commemoration event in Poland.

Employees and apprentices of the Volkswagen plants at Wolfsburg, Brunswick, Chemnitz, Emden, Hanover and Salzgitter who took part in the joint project, "Auschwitz – remembrance and future", of the International Auschwitz Committee (IAC) and the Volkswagen Group last year will also be participating in a number of

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Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site: railway tracks lead to the "Gate of Death" at the former Nazi extermination camp



Volkswagen plant in Wolfsburg: wreath laying and minute's silence for the victims of the Nazi dictatorship

events.

Gunnar Kilian says: "Volkswagen and the International Auschwitz Committee have joined together in a unique cooperation for 32 years. We want to keep the memory of the atrocities and suffering alive. This is why we see the conservation and maintenance



of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site as extremely important. People in the future must be able to see what sort of place Auschwitz was. 3,371 Volkswagen apprentices from Germany and Poland have already been involved in Memorial Site work at Auschwitz. On behalf of these young colleagues, I will, together with Christoph Heubner from the International Auschwitz Committee, be taking part in the commemorative event in Auschwitz and will be speaking to the other guests about our commitment."

Heads of state and representatives from more than 40 countries, including the German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, are expected to attend the event. The commemorative speech is to be given by Marian Turcki, a survivor of Auschwitz and Vice-President of the International Auschwitz Committee. Turcki has repeatedly talked to apprentices at the International Youth Meeting Centre in Oświęcim/Auschwitz about the lessons to be learnt for the present from the Holocaust. Turcki warns: "Never get used to seeing other people being derided or attacked. Never be indifferent – you could say that this is the eleventh commandment. Indifference kills."

Bernd Osterloh emphasizes: "Even after 75 years, January 27 reminds us that Germany can never absolve itself of its responsibility for the murder of millions of European Jews. It is our responsibility to keep remembrance alive and to pass it down to future generations. In connection with this task, we must always oppose those who wish to draw a line under this most dreadful chapter in German history."

Wreath-laying and opening of exhibition at the Volkswagen plant in Wolfsburg

Holocaust Remembrance Day at Volkswagen is to begin at 8:45 on Monday morning with the laying of a wreath by HR Board Member Gunnar Kilian and the Chairman of the Group Works Council, Bernd Osterloh, at the Stone of Remembrance on Südstraße (Entrance 2) followed by a minute's silence for the victims of forced labor, persecution and racial hatred under National Socialism.

At 2:00 in the afternoon, employees and dedicated members of the public will have an opportunity to lay white roses on the memorial stone for victims of forced labor in remembrance of the victims of National Socialism. Afterwards, the exhibition of Dr. Karl Teille in the forum of the Volkswagen AG Corporate Archive "Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe. Photographs and poems on the Shoah " will be opened.

The exhibition consists of large artistic photographs combined with poems written by Holocaust victims. The poems will be read by Bernd Upadek of the Scharoun Theater, with musical accompaniment by the string quartet of the Philharmonic Volkswagen Orchestra.



Free-of-charge concert: Israeli National Arts High School, Tel Aviv, at Congress Park Wolfsburg

On Tuesday, January 28 at 4:30 p.m. two ensembles from the Israeli National Arts High School, Tel Aviv, will be playing at the Wolfsburg Congress Park. Entry to this unique concert on the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day is free of charge – following registration by email to sekretariat.repraesentation@stadt.wolfsburg.de. More than 100 musicians will perform music highlighting the present and future of the Jewish people. Their repertoire ranges from baroque music to contemporary pieces. The ensembles of the Israeli National Arts High School "Thelma Yellin" have already played on concert tours at musical centres such as the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels and the UNESCO House in Paris as well as at concert halls in Germany and the United Kingdom.

The concert is being held by the city of Wolfsburg in cooperation with Volkswagen. For many years, the city and the company have been committed to remembrance of the atrocities of Auschwitz. The city of Wolfsburg and Volkswagen maintain close contacts with Holocaust survivors within the International Auschwitz Committee. They share a commitment to winning over young people for the conservation of the Auschwitz Memorial Site, encounters with survivors and the protection of democracy. The city of Wolfsburg and the Volkswagen Group are characterized by cultural diversity and the coexistence of many nations. The concert is being held with the support of Landesverband der Jüdischen Gemeinden von Niedersachsen (the State Association of Jewish Communities in Lower Saxony).

International youth encounter of the German Bundestag

At the invitation of the President of the German Bundestag, Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble, and the International Auschwitz Committee, three apprentices from Volkswagen are taking part in the international youth encounter from January 23 to 29, 2020: Anne Mundstock and Nora Siems (both from Wolfsburg), and Johannes Landgraf (from Chemnitz).

The youth encounter will include a visit to the Auschwitz Memorial Site from January 24-28, with group workshops, discussions with eyewitnesses and a tour of the main concentration camp and Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp as well as participation in the international commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz on January 27, 2020. At the end of the youth encounter, the three apprentices from Volkswagen will be attending a commemorative event of the German Bundestag for the victims of National Socialism. The main speeches will be given by the German President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and the President of Israel, Reuven Rivlin.

Memorial Site work and international youth meetings at Oświęcim /Auschwitz

Over the past 32 years, the joint project "Auschwitz – Remembrance and Future" of the International Auschwitz Committee (IAC) and the Volkswagen Group has brought more than 3,900 German and Polish apprentices and vocational school students as well as foremen and other management personnel from the Group to the Concentration Camp Memorial Site at Auschwitz and the International Youth Meeting Center.

Media information



The International Auschwitz Committee (IAC) was founded in 1952 by survivors to ensure that Auschwitz would not be forgotten. The committee includes organizations, foundations and Holocaust survivors from 19 countries. Information on the committee is available in English, French, German and Polish at www.auschwitz.info. About 1.5 million people were murdered by the Nazi regime at Auschwitz concentration camp and the extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. The Red Army of the Soviet Union liberated the few survivors on January 27, 1945.

Note: A [report](#) on Memorial Site work with interviews, images and films including the latest photos is available for downloading at www.volkswagen-newsroom.com.

About the Volkswagen brand:

The Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand is present in more than 150 markets throughout the world and produces vehicles at over 50 locations in 14 countries. In 2019, Volkswagen delivered 6,28 million vehicles including bestselling models such as the Golf, Tiguan, Jetta or Passat. Currently, 195,878 people work for Volkswagen across the globe. The brand also has over 10,000 dealerships with 86,000 employees. Volkswagen is forging ahead consistently with the further development of automobile production. E-mobility, smart mobility and the digital transformation of the brand are the key strategic topics for the future.
