

## **Creation of a Special Fund for Needy Victims of the Holocaust/Shoa**

At today's session, the Federal Council adopted a Decree concerning the Special Fund for needy victims of the Holocaust/Shoa. The Decree enters into force on 1 March 1997, and shall in no way have any prejudicial effect on the definitive structure which the Fund may eventually take.

In this manner, a Special Fund based on Article 12 of the Federal Budget Law will be created, serving as a provisional depository for a humanitarian fund fed into by the 100 million franc contribution supplied by the major banks and by further contributions anticipated from the economic sector. The Special Fund is to assure that urgent humanitarian assistance efforts will be able to be carried out during the coming months. In creating this Fund, the Federal Council is assuming its role as leader in setting up a structure.

The Fund is intended to give support persons in need who were persecuted for racial, religious, political, or other reasons, including those who in any other way were victims of the Holocaust/Shoa, as well as to assist their descendants in need.

The administrative organs of the Special Fund include the Fund executive and the Fund council to be appointed by the Federal Council. The Fund executive is composed of 7 eminent persons, made up of 4 Swiss citizens and 3 foreigners of Jewish origin. The Fund executive will operate under Swiss chairmanship. The three foreign members of the executive will be recommended by the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO). The Fund council is composed of 18 members, of whom 9 will be chosen upon recommendation of the WJRO. Assistance efforts and requests will be conducted by way of institutions and organizations which are dedicated to safeguarding the interests of the recipients. All institutions and organizations dedicated to the objectives of the Special fund are entitled to submit requests.

The present Decree was elaborated within a short period of time in close cooperation with representatives of the Swiss banks and economic sector, representatives of the WJRO, international and Swiss Jewish organizations, representatives of gypsy groups, as well as representatives of the State of Israel.

26.02.97