

Information on data processing: Collection Agencies A and B – negative files trade and commerce**Table of contents**

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Terms of reference

The series *Negativ-Akten Handel und Gewerbe* ("Negative files trade and commerce") of the *Sammelstellen* ("Collection Agencies") A and B, which are stored in the Austrian State Archives, contain relevant documents and information on trade and commercial businesses that were "aryanized" under the National Socialist regime. These records and files were considered a relevant source of information in connection with the applications filed with the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism: They were consulted for compensation claims asserted in the category *trade and commerce*.

The to digitize records of the "Negative files trade and commerce" was necessary due to the absence of a finding aid that would enable direct access to files and records for the internal investigations of the Fund. The aim of the digitization was to make the records and files accessible through their main characteristics for research purposes on trade and commercial enterprises. As a result, research for the application processing of the Fund was expedited. There was no intention to draft digital copies of the negative files.

Digitization

The transfer of data material was based on the examination of the file series and entered directly into an excel worksheet. About 320 negative files were available for digitization; 10 negative files could not be found and were entered subsequently during the creation of the *Findbuch*.

The following methodology was generally used for recording the data:

- Evident orthographic errors and wrong spellings were corrected
- For the processing of address information, directories were used such as the Vienna Address book *Lehmann 1938* (register of properties and names) whereas for determining the location of districts, the *Österreichische Amtskalender* ("Official handbook on public offices and institutions") was consulted.
- Abbreviations of district names were written out in full
- In order to facilitate geographical location, name of the place or name of the district were assigned to local addresses when missing, while non-Austrian addresses were provided with the country information.
- Formal standard procedures, developed by convention, were adopted by the staff of the Fund.

The following data was entered into the excel tables:

- Reference number: Sequential numbering of reference numbers (numbers of the negative files), which are preceded by the letter "N". In cases where more than one natural or legal (aggrieved) person was involved, an additional data entry was created. As a result reference numbers may appear several times.
- Trade and commerce related data: These records were obtained from the *Meldungsblatt* ("registration sheet") on which each file is based. Business name, type of business and company address were entered into the excel table. Where necessary, company addresses were corrected. If branches or the like were mentioned, the information was entered into the data field "explanatory notes".

- Personal data (historical person): Surname, forename, date of birth and address were obtained from the enclosed registration sheet, when available. Varying spellings of addresses were corrected. Additional addresses were entered into the data field "remarks".

The work of compiling 360 records was carried out by the staff of the Historical Research Department at the General Settlement Fund in 2008 and 2009.

Processing the digitized data

According to the guidelines of the *Findbuch*, the records entered into the data field "remarks" were as follows:

- Alternative dates of birth and dates of death of the aggrieved person,
- Names of family members of the aggrieved person (spouses, children, heirs), taking into account possible name changes and middle names,
- References to both file numbers within the series *negative files trade and commerce*, as well as *claims files* and *equity files*, were entered to facilitate location of supplementing documents or information.

Negative files which could not be retrieved during digitization, were entered retrospectively; in cases where this was not possible, surname, forename, type of business and address of business were reconstructed with the help of the registration sheets of the Collection Agencies.