Ruediger Mahlo

Commemorating Karolina Cohn

**Speech on the occasion of the commemoration ceremony at the Frankfurter Philantropin on 13 November 2017**

Without the discovery of the pendant at Sobibor extermination camp, future generations would have never found out anything about the life, suffering and death of Karolina Cohn. Even though, to this day, there is very little news about Karolina and her family, the laying of the tripping stone means that her name will forever be etched in stone for the whole world to see. It is also thanks to the wide coverage by international media, that her name will be retrieved from the darkness of history.

Many people have played a role in saving Karolina Cohn´s fate from fading into oblivion.

* Firstly, there are the archaeologists Yoram Haimi and Wojczek Matzurek, who excavated Karolina´s pendant in Sobibor.
* Then there are Yad Vashem´s researchers who linked the date and place of birth to Karolina Cohn based on the database of deportation lists funded by the Claims Conference.
* There is Chaim Motzen, who investigated Karolina´s dispersed family ties and united them to create a solid family tree.
* There are the pupils from the Anne-Frank-Schule who, like you, are trying to get closer to Karolina´s identity and imagination.
* And above all there is you, the family of Karolina, all of you here who came to Frankfurt in order to honour Karolina and perpetuate her memory.

Those of us at the Claims Conference who, for over six decades, have been representing the interests of Holocaust survivors in more than 50 countries, were wholeheartedly committed to honouring the memory of Karolina and her family with the laying of tripping stones. The victims of the Shoah, both the survivors and the dead, are entitled to have their names remembered and for the world to learn what happened to them.

As of today, the unknown dead from Sobibor are once again part of the Cohn/Eiseman/Bruckman family memory, and I dare say the collective memory of the global community as well. Our combined effort has enabled us all to reduce the criminal intention of the Nazi regime – to wipe out all Jewish life and all Jewish identities – to absurdity.