



OPEN LETTER

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REGARDING THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOOD WILL FOUNDATION ON TV CHANNEL LNK 18.30 NEWS PROGRAM

Public entity „The Foundation for Disposal of Good Will Compensation for the Immovable Property of Jewish Religious Communities“ (hereinafter - GWF) informs, that opinions expressed on TV channel LNK 18.30 News program regarding the GWF performance does not match the reality. Statements like „moreover Jews came forward to say Kukliansky was disbursing millions allocated from the Lithuanian budget for Jews without transparency“ are not justified, as the activity of GWF is regulated by more than one GWF Board chairperson - Faina Kukliansky. Lithuanian Republic Law on Good Will Compensation (21 June 2011 No XI-1470; can be found here: <https://gvf.lt/en/about-us/foundation/>) as well as GWF bylaws (<http://gvf.lt/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/GVF-%C4%AFstatai-2015-12-30.pdf>) established multilevel governance of the GWF's governing bodies and allocation of funds in stages. Also, each year LR State Audit checks the legality of the management, use and disposal of GWF state budget funds disbursed by the Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and until now GWF has not received a conclusion about non-transparent distribution of funds mentioned in the TV program (you can find all LR State Audit conclusions and reports here: https://www.vkontrole.lt/audito_ataskaitos_en.aspx?tipas=16). It should be additionally noted, that one of GWF Board chairpersons – Faina Kukliansky is a member of only one (out of three) GWF governing body. GWF Board consist of twelve members (six Board members are foreign citizens representing the most prominent organizations in the Jewish world, such as *World Jewish Restitution Organization, American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith International, The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Litvak Association in Israel*), by whose consensus the decisions are taken in GWF Board.

Regarding the statements of persons who spoke during the TV program, such as „we receive no money from the Foundation“, „money is distributed only to those communities that supports Kukliansky“ or „whilst it is used for the unknown purposes“ or „For example there is this loyalty criteria. Loyalty to the President of the Lithuanian Jewish Community“, GWF informs, that all the information about usage of the funds can be found on GWF website (<https://gvf.lt/en/about-us/projects/>) and the detailed GWF activity and financial reporting documents, which are audited each year is publicly accessible at PE Center of Registers website



(https://www.registrucentras.lt/jar/p_en/dok.php?kod=302702699). The content of the News program, when it is based solely on the stories of those who have not received GWF funding, does not reflect the reality. GWF, as any foundation administering the funds, does not operate under the influence of loyalty principles, but according to clearly established procedures in the implementation of which a large circle of specialists is involved and which are audited annually.

Regarding the statement expressed in the TV program “10 thousand Euros were allocated by Kukliansky led Foundation to Rūta Vanagaitė, who is famous for lying about partisans, for her new book.”, GWF explains that it is not GWF Board chairwoman Faina Kukliansky, that leads the GWF and allocates funds for project implementation, as the evaluation of project applications consists of three stages in which a large circle of specialists is involved. First stage is administrative compliance assessment carried out by GWF staff, project managers-accountants. If the application meets all the administrative compliance requirements it is submitted to GWF Selection Committee, i.e. for the evaluation in the second stage. In the Selection Committee, which consists of experts, expert evaluation is carried out according to the established priorities and criteria for the evaluation of applications. In the third, final project evaluation and approval GWF Board i.e. all twelve GWF Board members (list of GWF Board members can be found here: <https://gvf.lt/en/board/>) takes final decisions regarding funding/non-funding of project applications in accordance with *the Guidelines for Projects financed by the Funds of Good Will Foundation* and the results of previous evaluation stages defined in the above mentioned Guidelines (you can read the Guidelines here: <http://gvf.lt/en/files/2019/08/Application-Guidelines-for-the-Projects-Financed-by-GWF-20191.pdf>). Additionally, GWF informs, that the funds for this particular project is allocated for the publishing of the book “How did it happen? Christoph Dieckmann answers to Rūta Vanagaitė” for which applied Ms Rūta Vanagaitė, nevertheless her function at the project is more journalistic, as the main author of the book is Dr. Christoph Dieckmann - a prominent German historian, a member of the Presidential International Commission for the Evaluation of Nazi and Soviet Crimes, his monumental study „German Occupation Policy in Lithuania 1941-1944“ (*Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944*) was awarded the Yad Vashem International Book Prize for Holocaust Research.

Regarding the statement in the TV program “The State Audit Office has found that one third of the million euros was spent by the Foundation for purposes not provided for by law”, GWF explains, that in June 11, 2011 the above-mentioned law was adopted and compensation to the GWF started to be paid out in phases, it was not taken into account, that annual administrative budget is necessary to



administer the compensation received by the GWF under the conditions of use provided for by Law. This loophole in the law was corrected only in March 17, 2016 after LR Seimas adopted the law amending the 3rd article of the Republic of Lithuania law on Good Will compensation for the immovable property of Jewish religious communities No. XI-1470, establishing a provision that **the monetary compensation paid by law can be used to pay for administrative expenses of the Foundation** and annual sum of these expenses cannot exceed 10 percent of annual monetary compensation share approved in annual state budget. During the period from June 11, 2011 until March 17, 2016 funds recognized as used not for its intended purpose (313 759 Eur) was spent for administration of the Foundation by submitting the data about this to State Audit as well as Seimas of Lithuanian Republic. At the moment GWF in seeking to solve the situation created by the said loophole in the Law returns it's own funds in instalments each year to the cap of project funding, thus reducing the balance of the commitment.

Regarding the statement expressed in the TV program "It is very hard for me today to decide, who could stop her, as she has support from the Americans side", GWF explains, that one of the GWF Board chairpersons – Andrew Baker does not support one of the chairpersons of the GWF Board - Faina Kukliansky, but cooperates with the accumulated work experience, chairpersons of the Board work together to ensure transparent, fair and useful use of funds allocated by the Lithuanian State to GWF to finance projects in the fields of religion, culture, health care, sports, education and science of Lithuanian Jews and the annual Lithuanian Republic State Audit reports and conclusions only confirms this. We are convinced that the activities of the GWF are carried out properly and in compliance with all legal requirements and the GWF Board is a responsible team of highly experienced specialists in various fields, guided in its activities by the principles of world best practice, legitimacy, transparency, publicity and accountability to the Lithuanian state and society.

Sincerely,

GWF Board Chairman

Andrew Baker

Acting director

Indrė Rutkauskaitė