



Press release

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SED Victim's Commissioner at
German Parliament

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IKEA Germany, UOKG, and the SED Victims' Commissioner Agree to Support the Nationwide Hardship Fund for SED Victims

Today, IKEA Germany handed over a letter of intent to the SED Victims' Commissioner at the German Bundestag, committing to support the planned nationwide hardship fund for the victims of the SED dictatorship with an amount of €6 million.

The nationwide hardship fund, which the German Bundestag will decide on in the coming weeks based on a draft law from the federal government, aims to provide unbureaucratic support to victims of the SED dictatorship in economic distress. These victims include, in particular, political prisoners who were forced to work in GDR prisons.

This commitment follows years of close exchange between IKEA Germany, the Union of Victims' Associations of Communist Tyranny (UOKG), and the SED Victims' Commissioner since the office was established in 2021.

After it became known that products involving forced labor by political prisoners in the GDR were sold by IKEA, the company initiated an independent investigation in 2012. Subsequently, IKEA funded the creation and publication of a comprehensive scientific study on forced labor by Dr. Christian Sachse, a scientific advisor to the UOKG. With the agreement to financially support the hardship fund,



IKEA, UOKG, and the SED Victims' Commissioner are concluding a joint path.

Dieter Dombrowski (Federal Chairman of UOKG):

“After it became known that the company was involved in forced labor, IKEA accepted our invitation to engage in dialogue. Together, we have pursued the path of clarification, and IKEA has met the affected individuals on equal terms. Today’s decision is groundbreaking. We hope that other companies will follow IKEA’s example.”

Evelyn Zupke (SED Victims' Commissioner):

“For me, IKEA’s commitment to support the hardship fund is a sign of responsible handling of even the dark chapters of its own company history. We cannot undo what the victims experienced in GDR prisons, but we can meet them with respect today and support them, especially in times of need. This is the path IKEA has chosen, and I am very grateful for that.”

Walter Kadnar (CEO & CSO of IKEA Germany):

“We regret wholeheartedly that products for IKEA were also produced by political prisoners in the GDR. Since this became known, IKEA has consistently worked to clarify the situation. We therefore welcome the implementation of the hardship fund and are pleased to be able to keep our promise. Since 2000, IKEA has had one of the world’s most advanced and recognized supplier codes of conduct (IWAY). As a value-oriented company, it is a matter of course for us to take appropriate measures to minimize the consequences of violations of human rights or environmental obligations.”