



COMMISSIE Individuele
TEGEMOETKOMING Slachtoffers
WOII Transporten NS

Summary of the Advisory Report of the Committee on Individual Compensation for Victims of WWII Transport by NS

June 26, 2019



Introduction

N.V. During the Second World War, Dutch Railways (hereinafter 'NS') was instructed by the German occupier to transport more than one hundred thousand people from the Netherlands to the country's borders, destined for concentration and extermination camps outside the Netherlands. NS sent the occupier invoices for these transports. Many of the deportees were killed in these camps. NS considers cooperation in these transports to be a black page in its history and has therefore devoted a great deal of attention in recent decades to the collective commemoration of the suffering inflicted on so many people.

On 27 November 2018, NS decided – after a number of discussions with Salo Muller, whose parents died in a camp – to also recognise the suffering of these victims individually and to make financial compensation available to those most directly involved. This pertains to those from the Jewish community and the Roma and Sinti communities who were transported from the Netherlands to concentration and extermination camps outside the Netherlands by NS by order of the occupying forces, with the aim of exterminating them as a population group.

NS therefore set up the 'Committee on Individual Compensation for Victims of WWII Transport by NS' at the beginning of this year, which should provide independent advice on the level of benefits and on who should be eligible for them. The Committee consists of the following members: Job Cohen (chairman), Ellen van der Waerden and Lilian Gonçalves-Ho Kang You. The Secretary of the Committee is Eva van Ingen. The Committee delivered its opinion at the end of June.

The Committee was well aware that the design of a scheme that fulfils NS's intentions and that can also be accepted by those involved as being 'appropriate and reasonable' is an extraordinarily complex, if not almost impossible, task. This applies in the first place to the scope of the scheme. There are groups and individuals who do not fall within the scope given to the Committee, but who have often experienced great suffering, sometimes to this day.

It was also extremely difficult to give an opinion on the amount of the sum involved. There is simply no reasonable or appropriate amount of money that can compensate in any way for the suffering inflicted on the persons covered by the Scheme. Therefore, there can be no true 'compensation'. The Scheme concerns reparations, which must be seen as a moral gesture by which NS wishes to recognise its share in the individual suffering the occupying forces inflicted on those involved and their direct surviving relatives.

In the light of the foregoing, the Committee advises NS to establish a collective expression of remembrance and historical research in addition to the scope and amount of the



individual compensation, and thus also to do justice to the sentiment of other victims of the transports by order of the occupying forces who are not covered by the individual compensation on which this advice has been issued.

Opinion of the Committee.

The Committee recommends, partly on the basis of an examination of other schemes, that the individual payments be determined as follows:

- For all Jews, Roma and Sinti still alive who were transported by rail to Westerbork, Vught or Amersfoort during the Second World War by order of the occupying forces with the aim of transporting them to a concentration or extermination camp outside the national borders with the aim of the occupier to exterminate them as a population group, or from other locations in the Netherlands directly to concentration and extermination camps abroad, a payment of €15,000.
- If these transportees died during or after the war, a compensation of €7,500 applies for the widow or widower.
- If the transported person did not have a widow or widower, or if he or she has died in the meantime, children who are still alive may jointly qualify for a payment as follows:
 - if the oldest child still alive was born before 8 May 1945, a payment of €7,500 for the children together;
 - if the oldest child was born after that date, a payment amounting to €5,000 for the children together.

The Scheme is always based on the situation as it was on 27 November 2018, the date on which NS decided to create the Scheme. This means that legal heirs will replace the person who was eligible for individual compensation on 27 November 2018 but died after that date.

Collective expression of recognition

The Committee is aware that the Scheme as it is currently set up does not provide for transported Jews, Roma and Sinti who did not survive the war and did not have a partner or children when they died, and for those who did survive the war but are no longer alive and have not had a partner or children or are no longer alive. This is a substantial number, including at least the approximately 20,000 children who were put on transport during the war to extermination camps where they were almost immediately gassed.

These groups fall outside the scope of the Scheme. However, this does not alter the fact that recognition of their fate and NS's share in it also merits explicit attention.



The Committee advises NS to consider, in consultation with the groups concerned, a collective expression of recognition of the suffering and fate of the large group of transported prisoners, for whom the Scheme can no longer be invoked.

Historical research

The Committee advises NS to conduct an in-depth investigation into the role of NS during the Second World War, focusing on 'transports during the war', with a view to deepening historical insight and reflecting on its own actions during the war years.

As noted earlier, representatives of the groups consulted expressly stated that there is a great need for more information and historical insight into the role played by NS during the war.

The Committee endorses this, especially now that it has become apparent that the perspective of 'transports during the war' in its entirety has never been the subject of historical research. Investigating sources that can shed more light on the execution of transports commissioned by the occupying forces can deepen one's understanding of this episode in the history of the company, contribute to the historical perspective on the war years in the Netherlands and thus also do justice to the sentiment of other victims of the transports by order of the occupying forces who are not covered by the individual compensation on which this advice has been issued.