

Address given by Hans Lukaschek (2 November 1951)

Caption: On 2 November 1951, on the occasion of the departure of the one millionth displaced person from the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) to his native land, Hans Lukaschek, West German Minister for Displaced Persons, summarises the achievements of the campaign carried out by the International Organisation for Refugees in Europe.

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Ladies and gentlemen, generally speaking, farewells are not an occasion for rejoicing. Today, however, we have gathered to celebrate the departure of the one millionth refugee to whom the International Refugee Organization, together with host nations, has given the opportunity to begin a new life. Only through cooperation among people of goodwill has it been possible to satisfy the wish of a million Europeans to rebuild their existence through emigration, and it is this cooperation that gives us cause for rejoicing today.

Political developments in Europe over the past twenty years have thrown millions of people's lives into turmoil, uprooted them from their native soil and compelled them to seek refuge in a part of the world that seemed to offer all of them a decent future. At the end of the last war there were eight million displaced foreigners in Germany, seven million of whom were able, with the aid of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), to return to their countries of origin, which meant that more than one million displaced aliens were still in Germany when the IRO became operational on 1 July 1947; while they could have returned to their own countries, they preferred, because of the political changes that had occurred back home, to remain in Germany, since it was the most easterly country of Central Europe within the free world. It was undoubtedly the common task of all free countries to try to offer these people a new opportunity to develop.

Such opportunities, however, are very limited in our country, since the outcome of the war left us with more than nine million displaced Germans who had been forcibly expelled from their native regions. A new home and new development prospects had to be created for these people, too.

The burdens imposed by such displacements of population are extremely onerous.

The Federal Government felt duty-bound to provide assistance, including material assistance, to the displaced aliens who had been uprooted as a result of measures taken by the German Government before 1945. It made sizeable financial contributions in an effort to alleviate the greatest distress and to repair the damage inflicted by the previous regime. The Federal Government has spent the following annual amounts to provide deportees with services, accommodation, food and direct financial aid:

1945:	302	million	marks
1946:	712	"	"
1947:	556	"	"
1948:	393	"	"
1949:	321	"	"
1950:	214	"	"

This comes to a total of 2 498 million marks, to which may be added other substantial direct and indirect payments.

The member States of the IRO, a body that is particularly responsive to the plight of displaced aliens, took joint action to enable the IRO to provide aid averaging more than 120 million dollars a year in the period from 1947 to 1951. Considerable financial burdens have undoubtedly been placed on the member States by this effort to assist the 1 570 000 displaced aliens in the care of the International Refugee Organization, the vast majority of whom had been living in Germany for a number of years. One million of these displaced persons have now been able to emigrate to other countries.

Besides the aforementioned sum of two-and-a-half thousand million marks from the German Federal Republic, victims of the Nazi regime have also been paid 22.3 million dollars by the IRO from German assets seized in other countries. The countries to which a total of one million refugees have been able to emigrate face considerable long-term financial burdens.

All of this should only remind us of the massive efforts that have been required of all people of goodwill in the free world in order to create the conditions in which a million Europeans have been able to rebuild their

lives.

We are delighted that this model of international cooperation has preserved a million people's faith in brotherliness, and we firmly believe that they will prove to be worthy citizens of their adopted countries.

It is my fervent wish that equally exemplary international cooperation will also help to build a future for those other displaced Europeans to whom less assistance has been available, namely those who have opted to build the foundations of a new life in their places of refuge. The age of forced migration must be brought to an end.

Besides celebrating the fact that you, Mr Ranezay, have been given the opportunity today to rebuild your future in another country, we are also here to remember the work performed by countless people of goodwill on behalf of the International Refugee Organization over the past four years, driven by the desire to help fellow human beings in distress and overcoming seemingly insurmountable difficulties in order to implement the emigration programme successfully.

The success of this complex international teamwork owes everything to the organisational skills and indefatigable energy of Mr Kingsley. After the forthcoming conclusion of its operations, the IRO will always be remembered with gratitude in the hearts of all those whom it has helped over the last four years.

Let me conclude by thanking the International Refugee Organisation for its work in the service of true humanity and to express to you and your family, Mr Razenay, who represent a million displaced Europeans, my sincere good wishes for a happy and successful future as you prepare to set off on your journey.