

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

BERLIN OFFICE LAWRENCE AND LEE RAMER CENTER FOR GERMAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

MISSION STATEMENT

The American Jewish Committee Office in Berlin represents the positions of AJC members on issues of concern to the American Jewish community within Germany and Europe, expanding AJC political leverage on the international stage. The Berlin Office is part of AJC's international structure. It reports to the Assistant Executive Director for Policy and Program and coordinates its activities with the Office of Government and International Affairs in Washington. The Berlin Office interacts with AJC's 33 offices throughout the US, its offices in Jerusalem, Geneva and Poland, and associated Jewish organizations in Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Mexico and Slovakia.

The office was established in 1998 to broaden contacts between AJC officials and representatives of both the German government and German organizations. The presence of an office in Germany is allowing AJC to take a more active role in the shaping of public opinion in the European arena on subjects of interest to American Jewry. The creation of the Lawrence and Lee Ramer Center for German-Jewish Relations has allowed AJC to deepen its ongoing dialogue in Germany on issues of mutual German-American-Jewish concern. The Hans Adler Library enhances the intellectual presence of the office.

For decades, the AJC has promoted democracy-building measures in Germany, working with the political institutions that are the cornerstone of a pluralistic civil society. With democracy firmly imbedded in German political consciousness, the existence of the Berlin Office is allowing AJC to work together with German groups and individuals to combat any form of extremism in Germany and develop such measures elsewhere in Europe. The office also plays an important role coordinating the responses of political and cultural institutions in Germany on issues of mutual concern.

Key areas in which the office is engaged include German-Jewish relations, transatlantic relations, European security structures, Germany's role within Europe, policies on Israel and the Middle East, Holocaust restitution and the transmittal of Holocaust memory, anti-Semitism and racism, interfaith and intergroup relations, minority rights, right-wing extremism and human right abuses.

Another focus of the office is to promote knowledge of the AJC and of American Jewry in Germany among representatives of important political institutions and among opinion leaders in various sectors of German society. Conversely, the Berlin Office reaches out to the AJC membership to provide information on Germany and Europe. The AJC Berlin Office also offers its support to the rapidly growing German Jewish community, as well as to communities in central and Eastern Europe.

The Berlin Office fulfills its objectives through a wide variety of approaches. These include: personal contact with partners and cultivation of high-level relationships in all key sectors of German society; lectures for selected groups of visitors at the AJC office; receptions; lecture programs for German audiences; conferences; panel and round-table discussions; exchange programs; visits to Germany of AJC leaders; publications; media work, as appropriate, to broaden the impact of the office's activities.

The rapidly growing role of Berlin as a crossroads for politics and culture in Europe positions the Berlin Office as an ideal venue for AJC political advocacy efforts in Europe.