



Comité International de Mauthausen

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International Mauthausen Liberation Ceremony

– New Sequence starting from 2016 on

Initial Situation:

A celebration of the anniversary of the liberation of the camp of Mauthausen has taken place, every year in the month of May, since 1946.

This international liberation celebration has developed over the years and decades to the worldwide biggest commemoration event: in some *jubilee* years, there have been more than 30,000 people participating in the main celebration in Mauthausen.

The sequence of this celebration consisting mainly in a marching in – in alphabetical order - of the international and national delegations to the former Appellplatz has globally remained unchanged for the last 40 years.

The celebrations have begun for many years at 9:00 a.m. at the national monuments, followed by the marching in of the delegations at 11:00 a.m. for the main celebration.

Until recently there have been only speeches in German (held by political authorities, artists, representatives from different religions, etc) notwithstanding the fact that an estimated 75% of the participants came from abroad.

Presenting the Problems:

- Because of the rigid timetable of the main ceremony, many of the delegations come under time pressure for their national celebration, as they have to be present at a precise moment in the row of the delegations.
- Because of the alphabetical order of the delegations and the huge amount of participants, the majority of the participants have to wait outside the Appellplatz while the ceremony has already started. Thus it has become impossible for many to attend the complete ceremony: their participation is limited to the "marching in" towards the sarcophagus, including the laying of a wreath . The *before* and *after* of the ceremony can not be watched or attended by them.
- Because of this complete "marching through" of all of the delegations the whole celebration can take up, at least in jubilee years, up to 2 and a half hours.
- Especially big delegations have to rush their participants through, which is not beneficial to a celebration with the utmost dignity.

- Because of the so divergent sizes of the delegations there always was an imbalance of delegations – big groups would have much more time and attention than smaller delegations.
- Out of each delegation, guests of honour would be led into the VIP area (on seats), all other participants had to leave the place around the sarcophagus as soon as possible and could hardly, if at all, participate in the remaining part of the celebration.
- Over all these years, the whole celebration has been an event more of "one behind the other" than of "being together".

The new Concept:

- **The common main celebration will start at 10.00 a.m.** instead of 11.00 a.m., which will give more flexibility to the delegations, as they can now stage their national celebration before the main ceremony (small and short national ceremonies) or after the common main celebration (big and longer ceremonies).
- We cancel **the marching in** (in alphabetical order) of the delegations.
- **All delegations will be present during the whole ceremony** at the former Appellplatz and will thus be able to witness all other delegations, the music, the short speeches, ... in real time.
- The **delegations** will therefore be positioned **according to a preestablished precise plan** (cf. attached sketch) on the **former Appellplatz**. This will enable all participants to be more or less equitably allowed to stand around the sarcophagus. To ensure the best possible view for those standing aftmost, the number of chairs will be doubled, i.e. some 2,000.
- The common main celebration will start by **a common ceremony of all participants** (e.g. the reading, in different languages, of the Mauthausen Oath).
- After this common ceremony, the delegations – as this has been the case until now – will be greeted, in alphabetical order, in their own language and will then lay a wreath at the sarcophagus. For this wreath laying, there will be a maximum of 20 persons per delegation, and a very short military ceremonial.



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- The short speeches of the CIM delegates will be held in their national idioms, between the different delegations, as well as some musical arrangements.
- This new concept will allow us to shorten the main ceremony to 60-90 minutes which will leave enough time for longer celebrations at the national monuments after.
- At the end of the common celebration, there will be **a common marching out of the former concentration camp** (so it will no longer be, as in previous years, a marching *in*). This is expected to much better meet the character of a liberation ceremony. At the head of this group marching out, will be the survivors, the CIM delegates, followed by the guests of honour and all other participants.
- The delegations will then, either walk over to their (national) monument or depart from the concentration camp. Another consequence of the new concept will be that much fewer persons will leave the Mauthausen memorial at the same time, rendering thus the departure much swifter.

Time Schedule:

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|----------------------------|--|
| 8:30 – 9:30 | small national ceremonies |
| until 9.00 (at the latest) | arrival of all delegations |
| ab 9:30 | Positioning, according to a precise plan, of the delegations at the Appellplatz |
| 10:00 – 11:30 | common celebration at the Appellplatz |
| 11:30 | Joint departue of all participants from the concentration camp and official end of the liberation ceremony |
| starting at 11:45 | big national ceremonies |
| 13:00/13:30 | end of national ceremonies, departure |