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| **District Representative Frau Uschi Lichtenegger’s speech:** |

Dear Sirs or Mesdames, Dear esteemed members of the Stones of Remembrance Association, Dear family members!

I warmly welcome you all to the opening of the 14th part of the Path of Remembrance here in Leopoldstadt*.* It touches me, dear relatives, that you made the trip despite the difficulties presented by the pandemic, to be here today in memory of those who were persecuted and murdered by the Nazi regime: parents, grandparents, siblings and relatives re-united.

Numbering people dehumanizes them and turns them into commodities. We know today that 6 million Jews were murdered by the Nazis. This terrible number is incomprehensible. Looking back, it’s hard for us to imagine what deportation, torture, humiliation really means. I don't think we can fully grasp and empathize today. The project of the Stones of Remembrance strives to ensure that the victims have their names returned to them. To make these victims visible in the streets from where they were taken, forcibly removed from their apartments.

When we walk through these streets of Leopoldstadt that we know so well, it is difficult for us imagine the atrocities that took place here, but these little golden stones are monuments to remind us. We understand that behind these names are our neighbors from the past, our ancestors, our relatives, and our friends.

Before the Shoah, Leopoldstadt was the center of Jewish culture and Jewish life in Vienna. Of the 48,000 or so Jews who were deported from Vienna, more than two thirds lived here. Gradually, Jewish history and its brutal elimination is becoming much more visible in our district than it was just a few years ago. In the commemorative year 2018, the façade of the Jewish temple was rebuilt. its four white columns symbolically standing again. Each of the 25 synagogues destroyed by the Nazis- 6 of them in Leopoldstadt –are illuminated at night in memorial.

The Jewish character of Leopoldstadt has also been revived during the last twenty years by the renaming of many streets to honour both Jews who were tragically deported or others who managed to escape. Exactly four weeks ago today, we celebrated the naming of the park at Elderschplatz after Elisabeth Ben David Hindler, the founder and long-time director of Association's Stones of Remembrance. We, as a District, honour you and the wonderful work that the association continues to do.

That the Leopoldstadt of today is so colorful in its cultural diversity is, in itself, a positive memorial against all forms of discrimination and hate. Happily, our district is once again home to the largest Jewish community in Vienna, and Jewish life has returned in the streets.

But we must be mindful and brave against those who try to exclude members of our community, be it for reasons of religion, nationality or belief. Together, we must ensure that the memory of the darkest chapter of our history is upheld to protect against anything similar happening in future. This is what Elisabeth Ben David Hindler believed and has shown us by her initiative.

I would like to thank the great team at Verein Steine der Erinnerung for their tireless efforts, and thank you all for being here today!