

What victims/survivors of childhood sexual abuse expect of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in Germany and of changes in society

Expectations concerning Hearings, Recognition, Justice and „Aufarbeitung“

„Aufarbeitung“ in German is: coming to terms with the past, accepting responsibility for the past, resolving unresolved issues of the past and learning lessons for the future.

The Independent Inquiry into Sexual Child Abuse in Germany investigates all forms of child sexual abuse in Germany, such as sexual abuse

- in institutions
- by family members
- by social environment
- in the context of organised crime (2017 – 2019)

The Commission's formats and activities up to now:

- Private sessions with victims/survivors: 1.283
 - Public hearings with victims/survivors and other experts: 3
 - Written reports by victims/survivors: 257
 - Close and regular cooperation with the Independent Commissioner for Child Sexual Abuse Issues and the Board of Survivors
- www.aufarbeitungskommission.de/english-information/

Quantitative data: 2 online surveys

316 questionnaires (1. online survey)
103 questionnaires (2. online survey)

Women: 85% Men: 11% Other: 3%
Age from under 20 to over 70, average: 50
Location of the sexual abuse: West 89%, East 11%

Context of the sexual abuse:

- Family 73%
- Social environment/neighbourhood 47%
- Institution / church 23%
- In the context of organised crime 20%
- Ritual abuse 14%
- Other / unknown 12%

- Victims / survivors expect immediate benefit from the commission's activities.
- Most important: (trauma-)therapy and well trained support should be accessible everywhere.

Focus of media coverage should be:

- Impact of sexual abuse (87%)
- Need of support and (trauma-)therapy (70%)
- Failure of state institutions (justice, compensation to victims (53%))

Qualitative data: 51 qualitative interviews, 53 participants

Categories of expectations of the Commission:

(1) The Commission validates what has happened

- Commission believes the victim/survivor
- Victims/survivors do not have to prove what cannot be proved (any longer)

(2) The Commission recognizes the effort of living a life under high psychological and mental stress and multiple burdens

The Commission should advocate

- easy access to therapy,
- refund of therapy costs,
- securing of livelihood and compensation.

(4) Motives and goals of victims/survivors

- Set an example for others
- Advocate self-help groups
- Advance political development
- Encourage removal of taboos
- Encourage public sensitivity
- Demand prevention

(3) The Commission should initiate legal change

- Abolish period of limitation
- Advocate effective punishment of perpetrators