

Germany: Jahn wants to get rid of former secret service agents from the Federal Commission for the Stasi Archives

Roland Jahn, the new head of the Federal Commission for the Stasi Archives (BStU), which is also known as the Gauck Office, wants to dismiss those employees who had co-operated with the East German secret service. For this purpose he ordered a legal opinion on possibilities of shifting these employees to other state agencies.

Currently, 47 former Stasi agents are employed at BStU. This is undermining the agency's authority and the reliability of the process of coming to terms with the communist past.

The fact that ex Stasi agents are working for this institution, whose task is to determine the accountability for the communist dictatorship, has given rise to controversies since at least 2006, when BStU for the first time stated the precise number of former East German secret service associates working for it. They were not dismissed despite petitions from former dissidents and associations of the victims of communism. Marianne Birthler, who was directing the office at that time, explained that this was prevented by German labour law. She argued that those individuals at the time of their employment had not concealed that they had been Stasi agents and therefore could not lose their jobs for this reason. BStU at the beginning of its operation employed former agents for example as archive workers and security guards.

Roland Jahn, who took his post on 11 March, announced at once that he would make efforts to get rid of the former Stasi agents from BStU. Their work for this institution, although totally legal, is discrediting and undermining BStU's credibility. <ciechan>