



### **Washington Conference on Holocaust-era Assets: Terms of Reference**

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#### **Overall Goals**

- Update progress on gold since December 1997 (both historical studies and the Tripartite Gold Commission).
- Enable historians and other experts from governments, research institutions, and NGOs to share the results of their research on:
  - The history of Nazi-confiscated art and its loss or return;
  - Nazi-era insurance business practices; and
  - Other asset categories.
- Explain historical government programs for restitution and compensation of victims.
- Reinforce desirability of openness -- open archives, shared information, public engagement, Internet dissemination.
- Establish consensus on and commitment to continued research, public disclosure, and guidelines on Holocaust-era claims by the end of the millennium.
- Highlight Holocaust education, research, and remembrance.

#### **Artwork**

- Survey scholarly historical records and identify major issues.
- Explain national and private actions taken or underway with respect to Nazi-confiscated artwork.
- Promote consensus on the broad principle of addressing the issue of Nazi-confiscated artwork and its return to its rightful owners as a moral as well as a legal matter.
- Encourage countries to take a more active approach with respect to their art holdings in national museums as well as in government buildings both by conducting thorough research into the provenance of holdings and by searching for the rightful owners or heirs.
- Encourage a similarly active practice for private art owners, including museums, auction houses, art dealers, and other traders of art, so that greater due diligence in researching the provenance of artwork is made standard practice. We also want to encourage international cooperation among these groups.
- Explore the creation of new means of resolving disputes over ownership of Nazi-confiscated artworks that might expedite the restitution process.
- Build on the concept of open archives by seeking support for creating (1) a guide to the relevant archival information on Nazi-confiscated artwork and (2) possibly a central repository of such information in database or other form.

## **Insurance**

- Survey historical records and identify major issues and efforts to redress them.
- Examine principles of and possibilities for insurance claimants to seek information on World War II-era policies and to file claims.
- Promote agreement among insurance companies, insurance regulators, and the World Jewish Congress on an international commission concerning Holocaust-era insurance claims.
- Seek clarification of nationalization of insurance companies in eastern and central Europe.

## **Other Assets**

- Review records of other assets, including libraries, archives, and communal property.
- Examine in smaller seminars other asset categories.
- Review property issues, synagogues, museums, and country-owned facilities.

## **Gold**

- Update historical work undertaken by historical commissions (Bergier Commission, Second Gold Report, Spain, Sweden, and all other countries).
- Discuss progress on Tripartite Gold Commission and the operation of the Nazi Persecutee Fund.
- Complete work on declassification of documents.
- Work toward establishing more web site links for archival research.

## **Next Steps**

- Reaffirm consensus on archival openness and efforts for Holocaust remembrance, education, and research.
- Reaffirm commitment to complete historical commissions' and obtain contributions toward restitution work by December 31, 1999.

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