

# Holocaust Survivors Note Progress at November's Immovable Property Review Conference

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A number of Holocaust survivors are pointing to the important steps taken at the November 26–28 Immovable Property Review Conference in Prague, including the push to pass knowledge about the Nazi injustices on to younger generations and continued efforts to spread the best practices for implementing just and effective Holocaust restitution policies.

*"I survived. I had a good education, I survived. What is my obligation to my father and brothers who died in Auschwitz?" asked **Marian Turski**, a Holocaust survivor and Vice President of the Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw. "I am claiming for the restitution of Jewish memory. This is something like Atlantis, but this is our Atlantis. And this is why I wanted to raise this issue here."*



Fellow survivor and Vice President of the International Auschwitz Committee **Felix Kolmer** agreed that a key role filled by the IPRC was its work in helping to preserve memory and construct a *"bridge from the past to future generations."*

Some 41 countries sent delegations to the IPRC, which builds on the work of the Terezín Declaration of 2009 and the Restitution Best Practices Guidelines of 2010. The conference also laid the foundation for a major conference set to take place in Brussels in June 2013, with a focus on social welfare for Holocaust survivors. At the IPRC, individual countries presented reports on the progress they have made since delegations last gathered two years ago. While legal and historical conditions differ between nation-states, this peer review process allows countries to point to successful practices and thus allow others to adapt these policies to their own local conditions. *"They provide a good example for countries who haven't found a way to solve things,"* Kolmer said.

As Holocaust survivors reach advanced age, time increasingly becomes a factor in pursuing some semblance of justice through restitution for those who suffered from Nazi injustices. After noting that his own *"biological clock"* was ticking, Turski reiterated the need to continue building on the IPRC's accomplishments in both preserving Holocaust memory and pursuing restitution or compensation. *"I can tell you, 'Thank You.' In this way you take the baton from us,"* he said. *"Good luck, thank you!"*

The IPRC was organized by the European Shoah Legacy Institute (ESLI) in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Forum 2000 Foundation. ESLI is organizing a follow-up conference for June 2013 in Brussels, focused on social welfare issues for Holocaust survivors.