

# Forum 2000 Foundation Co-organizes Immovable Property Review Conference As Part of Continued Efforts to Recover Property Stolen During Holocaust

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As part of continued efforts to right injustices committed during the Holocaust, the Immovable Property Review Conference (IPRC) will take place on November 26–28, 2012 at Prague's Czernin Palace. The European Shoah Legacy Institute, in close cooperation with the Forum 2000 Foundation, is organizing the event under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. Partners of the conference are Prague City Hall and Czech Radio.

*"The tragedy of the Holocaust changed the face of Europe forever – the Nazis, the Fascists and their collaborators murdered millions of people and stole their property,"* said Czech First Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister **Jiří Schneider**, a Co-chairman of the event. *"For more than six decades, we have been facing the challenge of how to secure the social welfare needs of survivors, how to recover or compensate for the confiscated property and how to pass on the legacy of the Holocaust to future generations."*

The conference will build on the results of earlier such meetings and the outcomes, including the Terezín Declaration, the Joint Declaration of the European Commission and 2009 Czech European Council Presidency and the 2010 Restitution Guidelines. Such agreements have outlined parameters for future Holocaust education and research, promoting social care for survivors, preserving memorials and other sites of memory, provenance research into looted art, continued trans-border cooperation and information exchange, as well as the exchange of best practices.

Discussions take on added urgency as many Holocaust survivors reach old age. As Nobel Peace Prize Laureate **Elie Wiesel** said at the Holocaust Era Assets Conference in Prague 2009: *"It is with pain sincerity that I must declare my conviction that living survivors in poor health or in financial need deserve first priority. They suffered enough. And enough people benefitted from their sufferings. Why not do everything possible and draw from all available funds to help them live their last years with a sense of security, in dignity and serenity?"*



Representatives of the 47 countries which have endorsed the Terezín Declaration, experts and representatives from various international organizations are expected to attend the conference and reflect on progress achieved by the committed countries in their respective fields in recent years. They will also share their progress reports, lessons learned and best practices, and recommend future steps. Former U.S. Diplomat **Stuart Eizenstat**, Israeli MP and Holocaust survivors **Colette Avital**, **Felix Kolmer** and **Ben Helfgott** will be among the featured speakers. Specific topics will include discussions on religious and communal property, private property, economic issues, the role of the media and public perception, as well as the role played by international institutions in the restitution process.

*"Despite the achievements of conferences in Washington in 1998 and in Prague in 2009, and of various other public initiatives, many important issues remain to be addressed,"* Co-chairman Jiří Schneider said.