

The European Shoah Legacy Institute (ESLI) was created in 2009 following the conclusion of the Holocaust Era Assets Conference in the Czech Republic and the signing of the Terezin Declaration by forty-seven participating countries, including all European Union member states.

Tasked with supporting governments to fulfill the moral obligations relating to post-Holocaust justice contained within the Terezin Declaration, over the past seven years ESLI has facilitated international dialogue, the sharing of best practices, and tenaciously advocated for improvements in the provision of welfare services for Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution who suffered unspoken suffering and require ongoing psychosocial support.

In 2015, ESLI organised an international conference on social welfare for Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution that was attended by Holocaust survivors and representatives from over forty Terezin Declaration countries. Ministers and other high-level Government officials engaged with representatives from non-governmental organisations that work with victims of Nazi persecution to share their experiences, discuss best practices, and foster working relationships for future cooperation. The conference also saw the launch of ESLI's Social Welfare Database, which maps the availability of welfare services across all forty-seven Terezin Declaration countries.

The European Shoah Legacy Institute also engaged in activities relating to the restitution of immovable property. In 2010, ESLI issued published its *'Guidelines and Best Practices for the Restitution and Compensation of Immovable (Real) Property Confiscated or Otherwise Wrongfully Seized by the Nazis, Fascists and Their Collaborators during the Holocaust (Shoah) Era between 1933-1945, Including the Period of World War II'*, that was subsequently endorsed by 43 countries.

In 2012 ESLI organized the International Property Review Conference, which was attended by 39 countries and saw a review of progress made since the endorsement of the Terezin Declaration three years prior.

In 2015, ESLI commissioned an extensive study on the status of restitution of immovable property and the extent to which countries were fulfilling their moral obligations under the Terezin Declaration and 2010 Guidelines and Best Practices. This unique study was officially launched at the European Parliament in April 2017 during the “Unfinished Justice: Restitution and Remembrance” conference co-organised by ESLI at the European Parliament in Brussels. The Conference was hosted under the patronage of Mr. Antonio Tajani MEP - President of the European Parliament - who also participated and gave a speech, and was attended by Members of the European Parliament, representatives of the European Commission, governmental officials including two ministers, Holocaust survivors, and representatives of non-governmental organisations. The Conference culminated in a Declaration signed by over 70 MEPs that will be utilized as a tool for encouraging ongoing discussion and progress on issues relating to post-Holocaust justice.

We are delighted and honored that our activities are important steps in redressing historical injustices, and have published a number of crucial documents of use for others working in this field.

In addition to immovable property, the European Shoah Legacy Institute was also actively engaged in promoting the restitution of movable property and the importance of provenance research as a means for protecting cultural heritage during armed conflicts.

Between 2012 and 2014, ESLI organized and hosted a series of five workshops, known collectively as the Provenance Research Training Program, in Magdeburg, Vilnius, Zagreb, Athens, and Rome. These workshops were developed around the complimentary themes of research, history, and ethics, and were conducted with a particular focus on: analytical and methodological tools that can serve to identify and assess patterns and compare these processes and their international impact; the impact of cultural plunder on museum collection management practices; the provision of a core understanding of the displacement of cultural objects throughout pre-war Europe, wartime plunder and its impact on collecting practices

within the context of the international art market, and post-war efforts to recover looted cultural assets; and the ethical implications of cultural plunder during the Nazi era, current international policies, and art trade practices.

The European Shoah Legacy Institute significantly strengthened its cultural heritage protection activities when it partnered with the Committee of Legal Affairs of the European Parliament in 2015. As part of these activities, ESLI hosted an exhibition and conference on conflict looting and the importance of provenance research to cultural heritage protection at the European Parliament in Brussels, led by Mr. Pavel Svoboda MEP – Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs.

The exhibition on provenance research and cultural heritage protection aimed to address the inextricably linked themes of history, ownership, and possession that define our understanding of the nature and value of art and cultural property. It is hoped that this exhibition will continue to encourage audiences to explore their perceptions of the importance of inheriting, maintaining, and bestowing our shared cultural, intangible, and natural world heritage.

The linked conference brought together experts and senior representatives of the world's leading museums, auction houses, provenance and restitution organisations, and cultural heritage protection organisations to discuss the issues surrounding conflict looting and restorative justice, and the role that the European Parliament can play in combatting the trafficking of plundered cultural heritage. The conference and exhibition concluded with the decision of the Committee on Legal Affairs to commission a study into the viability and suitability of introducing legislation to the European Parliament to mandate provenance research as an indispensable mechanism to combat the trade in illicit antiquities and plundered cultural heritage.

Professor Marc-André Renold from the University of Geneva was commissioned to undertake the study, which was delivered to the Committee on Legal Affairs in May 2016. The report, entitled "Cross-border restitution claims of art looted in armed conflicts and wars and

alternatives to court litigations”, is available for download in English, French, and German from the ESLI website.

More than 70 years after the end of the Second World War, many survivors or their heirs are still awaiting justice for the suffering they experienced during one of the darkest chapters of modern history. The European Shoah Legacy Institute had been dedicated to advocating for and securing this justice ever since its foundation.

Another important aspect of ESLI’s work is its activities in the field of Holocaust education and remembrance. These include an interesting project in the form of an international poster competition for students of art and design, with the theme of Holocaust remembrance. The competition was held twice – in 2012 and 2014 – with entries evaluated by an international jury and winning posters exhibited at the United Nations and other prestigious sites in twenty-eight countries. This international competition generated a number of award-winning artworks visualizing from various angles – victims, children, bystanders, and perpetrators – the cruelty, senselessness, and suffering experienced during the Shoah and the importance that such events never happen again.

Although the European Shoah Legacy Institute will cease its activities, the passion and drive for post-Holocaust justice carries on, as we all share a moral obligation to remember those who suffered, commemorate the victims, and ensure such heinous crimes never occur again - both for ourselves and for our children and generations to come.

The European Shoah Legacy Institute expresses its sincerest gratitude and thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, and the Governments of Israel and the United States of America for their unrelenting support and cooperation over the past seven years. We also extend our appreciation to all the governments and organisations that have supported our activities and participated in our work; we would not have achieved anything without your encouragement and for that we are grateful.