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Press Release on Seminar at the European Parliament

On 23rd June 2015, the European Shoah Legacy Institute (ESLI), in cooperation with MEP Bastiaan Belder – Vice-Chairman of the EU Delegation for Relations with Israel – hosted a seminar at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium to highlight and publicize the achievements of the International Conference on Welfare for Holocaust Survivors and Other Victims of Nazi Persecution, held in Prague, Czech Republic on 26th and 27th May 2015.

The seminar was attended by Members of the European Parliament, officials from the European Commission, the Israeli Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, diplomats and ministerial delegates, civil society representatives, and members of the Jewish communities of Belgium and the Netherlands. The purpose of the seminar was twofold: firstly, to inform EU institutions of ESLI's recent achievements - including the International Conference on Welfare for Holocaust Survivors and Other Victims of Nazi Persecution and the progress made towards improving welfare availability and accessibility for victims of Nazism – and secondly, to help garner support for the creation of a Special European Envoy for post-Holocaust issues within the European Commission, who would coordinate with EU institutions currently monitoring, advocating for, and providing technical guidance on, the implementation of the Terezin Declaration.

In his opening remarks at the seminar, host MEP Mr. Bastiaan Belder – Vice Chair of the Delegation on Relations with Israel said at the seminar: "There can be no dignified life for all, if this does not include a life in dignity for Holocaust survivors" and Czech MEP Ms. Olga Sehnalova noted: "There has to be better coordination between member states in bringing justice to the Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution. The EU has to play a key role in this regard. That is why I also support and join the voices calling for establishing an EU Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism."

MEP Sehnalova's comments resonated with participants, who agreed that appointing a coordinator for post-Holocaust issues within the European Commission would be an excellent starting point for improving the state of welfare for victims of Nazi persecution. Also touched upon was the necessity to secure EU funding for civil society organisations involved in the provision of welfare services for survivors.

The European Shoah Legacy Institute is intent on continuing its cooperation with the European Parliament, the European Commission, national



governments, and other civil society organisations to ensure the provision of adequate welfare for all Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution – as endorsed by thirty-nine governments and over 200 participants at the May conference in Prague. To this end, the European

Shoah Legacy Institute will be hosting another seminar - devoted to the progress made by EU member states - for MEPs at the European Parliament in Brussels in October 2015.

As Holocaust survivor and honoured guest Mr. Simon Gronowski so aptly pointed out, it is impossible to truly remember the victims of the Holocaust whilst ignoring the needs of survivors.